

JOSEPH CRAWFORD WEMPLE



**A Pioneer Leader of
Lassen County, California,
1830-1921**

By Claude C. Wemple

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JOSEPH CRAWFORD WEMPLE:
A Pioneer Leader of
Lassen County, California,
1830-1921

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By Claude C. Wemple

WEMPLE GENEALOGY

Barent Wemple – b. date unknown, place unknown, possibly Holland or Bavaria

Jan Barentsen Wemple – b. Holland

Myndert Janse Wemple – b. 1649, Albany, New York

Johannes Wemple – b. 1675, Albany, New York

Reyer Wemple – b. 1703, Schenectady, New York

Johannes Reyner Wemple – b. 1732, Schenectady, New York

Nicholas Visscher Wemple – b. 1780, Schenectady, New York

John Nicholas Wemple – b. 1805, Rotterdam, New York

Joseph Crawford Wemple – b. 1830, Rotterdam, New York

Jay C. Wemple – b. 1873, Milford, California

Claude C. Wemple – b. 1896, Milford, California

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Claude C. Wemple is the first born son of Jay C. and Libby Decious Wemple. Claude's grandparents were all early California pioneers, the youngest being his grandmother, Mary Dickinson Decious, who was born in California in 1854. Claude's father, Jay C. was the fourth son of Joseph Crawford Wemple. Claude is a life long resident of Milford. He was born in 1896.

Claude married Henrietta Winchester shortly after he graduated from high school in 1916. He was active in sports while he attended high school, including baseball, basketball and track. On one occasion, in Reno, he took first place in the running broad jump, a Nevada High School record. Claude and Henrietta raised a family of three sons and one daughter. Henrietta passed away in 1984.

Claude worked for his father at farming and ranching from 1915 to 1932. Then, in 1932, he started to realize his life long goal of owning and operating a cattle ranch. It was in this year that he purchased his father's ranch, part of which was originally owned by Peter Lassen. Jay's ranch, at the time he sold it to Claude, consisted of approximately 500 acres.

By the time Claude retired, he had increased the size of his ranch to over 4700 acres. During his active ranching years Claude primarily raised beef cattle. But on various occasions, he also raised dairy cattle, hogs, Thoroughbred horses, as well as producing grain, hay, and alfalfa seed as cash crops.

The author also developed artistic skills. He hand-crafted silver mounted horse bridles to augment his income during the Great Depression. Upon occasion he made bridles that had a blued steel background that made a contrast with the engraved silver. His silver engraving added beauty to the bridles, said by many to be a highly developed art form.

Just as painters use canvass to express themselves, Claude, on one occasion, engraved an image of a Thoroughbred horse on German silver plate. This engraving is a true work of art. It naturally follows that Claude sketched. He practiced this skill in his early manhood and developed considerable talent in the general art field. He undoubtedly could have made his way as an artist. However, he chose as his main pursuit, agriculture. Included in his early sketches was

a successful pen and ink of a cattle-mountain-meadow scene for the cover of the Cattle Market and News Magazine of April 1930.

Even though extremely busy, Claude gave freely of himself in community service programs that he actively supported or chaired over a period of time. Some of the activities are:

Charter member, Lassen County Cattlemen Association.

President, Lassen County Cattlemen Association, 1949-1955.

Charter member, Lassen County Farm Bureau, Janesville/Milford Center.

Chairman, Janesville Farm Bureau, Janesville/Milford Center, 1 year.

Member, Lassen County Fair Board, 1952-1974.

Charter Member Lassen County Historical Society.

President Lassen County Historical Society, 1963-1967.

Member, Advisory Board of the Bank of America, Susanville Branch, 1949-1975.

School Board Trustee, Milford Elementary and Lassen Union High School and Junior College, 1937-1954.

School Board Chairman, Lassen Union High School and Junior College, 1947-1948.

Member, Farmers Home Administration Advisory Board, late 1940's.

Charter Member, Lassen County Sheriff's Posse, 30 year membership.

Community Service Awards:

Lassen County Cattleman Association, two awards for appreciation of service.

Western Fair Association, award for 20 years of service.

Lassen County Fair Board award for 20 years of service.

California Soil Conservation District Farmer of the year, 1982.

Lassen County Fair Board, Old Timer of the year, 1976.

Alturas Land Bank, Lassen County Cattleman of the year, 1984.

Lassen County Fair Association, Claude with

Henrietta selected as Marshalls of the Lassen County Fair Parade, 1980.

The author is also interested in preserving history. He was a charter member of the Lassen Historical Society. He served in leadership roles in this organization for several years and wrote several articles on the history of the Milford community for this society.

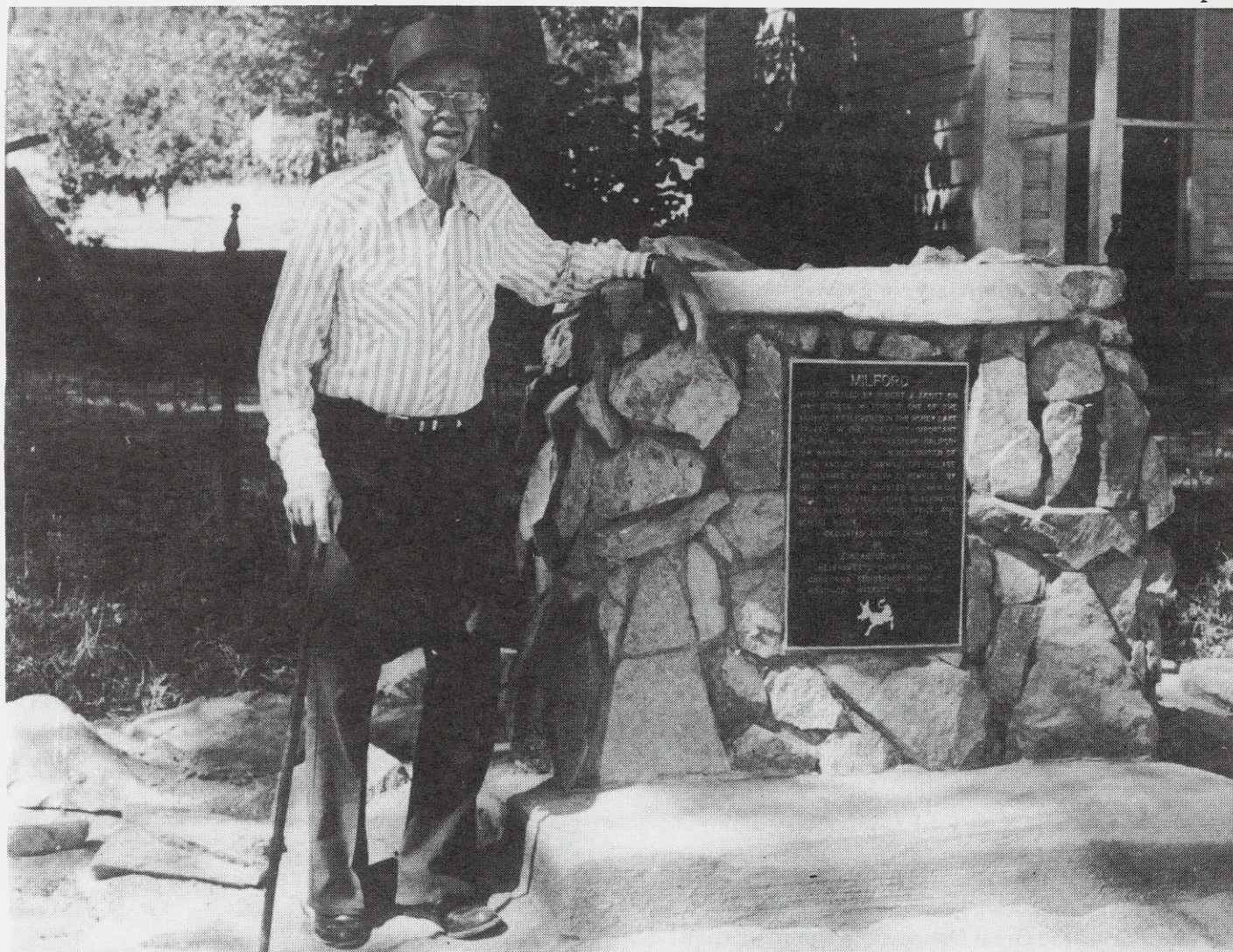
An excellent memory of times past is another area

where Claude excels. This book of Claude's memories, primarily of a Grandfather he openly admits admiring, is a testimony of Claude's memory.

The author, who is nearly 90 years old, continues to reside in Milford, Lassen County, California, where he was born.

In reaching his life goals, honesty and fairness were never sacrificed by Claude in his many dealings, business or otherwise.

—David Wemple



THE AUTHOR

The author, Claude C. Wemple, stands by a monument which commemorates the founding and naming of Milford, California. Immediately to the right rear is the present day Milford post office. This small building is the one and same in which JOSEPH C. WEMPLE died in 1921. One corner of N.V.'s home can be seen in the upper left corner. This same home, considerably modified and upgraded, is now owned and occupied by Donald J. Wemple and his wife, Gay Corder Wemple. Donald is Claude's oldest son and Joseph C. Wemple's great grandson.

The wording on the monument says in part: "Milford first settled by Robert J. Scott on May 10, 1856. Milford was one of the first settlements in Honey Lake Valley. In 1861 the first important flour mill in northeastern California was built here. In recognition of this and of a sawmill the village was named by Joseph C. Wemple."

The monument was dedicated August 3rd, 1985, by E. Clampus Vitus, Neversweats Chapter 1863, California Registered Point of Historical Interest No. LAS-001

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Acknowledgement of Reference Materials

ASA Merrill Fairfield. Pioneer History of Lassen County, California.

E. Clampus Vitus. Neversweats Chapter 1863. California Registered Point of Interest No. Las. 001.

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Lassen County Assessor Real Estate Plat Map: TS27N, R14E; Sections 22, 23, 24, 26, & 27.

Lassen County Assessor Real Estate Plat Map: TS26 and 27N, R15 and 16E, Sections 21 and 22 - Sections 1 and 12.

Lassen County Historical Society, Milford Edition.

U. S. Department of Agriculture, Forest Service Map, Plumas National Forest, California, Mt. Diablo Meridian.

U. S. Department of Interior Geological Survey Map, Doyle, California Quadrangle.

U. S. Department of Interior Geological Survey Map, Milford, California Quadrangle.

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JOSEPH CRAWFORD WEMPLE

By Claude C. Wemple

CHAPTER ONE

Joseph Crawford Wemple was born near Schenectady, New York, December 20, 1830, the second child of John N. and Nancy (Crawford) Wemple. The Wemples were emigrants from Holland, but the Crawfords came from Ireland, and Crawford is not an Irish name.

The Irish Crawfords, I have been informed by a friend, Harold Crawford, emigrated from Scotland to Ireland.

John served in the State Militia in his early life. He probably was nineteen or twenty years old when he married Nancy Crawford. John N. was born in the year 1805, seven years before the War of 1812, while Nancy Crawford's birth occurred four years later in 1809. The second child, Joseph Crawford, was born during the latter part of 1830 when John N. was twenty-five years old. To this union a girl was born, the last child before John N.'s death. According to Prof. J. W. Guinn's Biographical Record, Nancy married a second time and gave birth to three half-sisters to Joe. Their name was Haynes, but this union was not of long duration, for in time Nancy succumbed to the rigors of early nineteenth century life.

When Joseph C. Wemple was eighteen months of age, he and his brother, Nicholas V., who was perhaps three years old or a little older, were playing with an ax. Nicholas had the ax in his hands, but Joseph had his right hand on the chopping block. Nicholas then ordered Joseph to take his hand off the block. When Joseph refused, Nicholas came down with the ax on his hand and severed all four fingers. Joseph always said that he had never gone to a doctor, but he must have been treated by a doctor then. Primitive as the methods were, the flesh and skin had to be pulled over the ends of the bones. The palm, in after years, seemed to end in the finger joint. The only anesthetic at that time was a drink of whiskey, a leather strap to bite on, and strong men to hold the patient down.

Joseph never told of the operation — perhaps he was too young to remember and perhaps both boys were too young to realize what had happened.

How the mother managed to hold her family together

while she was widowed or how long she had the whole responsibility of caring for her family we do not know but we would naturally conclude that her two sons gave more than a little help.

At sixteen, young Joe took a job on the Erie Canal driving horses or mules which were used to pull canal boats. He was paid sixteen dollars per month for this labor. Here we more or less lose track with other members of the family who moved to Michigan and I suppose Joe gave up his job and went with them.

The Wemple family settled in Ingham County, Michigan. Nancy spent the rest of her life in Michigan and Nicholas also. Joe, however, after teaching school for one year, worked as a carpenter and we suppose other jobs. We have concluded that Joe lived in Michigan for twelve or thirteen years.

On March 28, 1855, Joe married Eliza Jane Christie, and on April 23, 1856, a daughter, Elizabeth J. was born. She was, however, never known by any other name than Libby.

Three years after Joe's daughter was born he decided to join a wagon train and seek his fortune in the vicinity of Pike's Peak.

To make a trip across the continent from Michigan required a great deal of preparation — to make one to Pike's Peak required somewhat less. The wagons usually purchased their main stock at the Missouri River, for there were other means of travel before emigrants arrived at St. Joseph. I have heard that as long as three weeks were needed to equip a wagon train.

In any event the wagon train took off for Pike's Peak and evidently was part way up the peak when they met so many disheartened and discouraged people coming down the mountain, that they turned around, their dreams of grandeur and immediate wealth completely vanquished.

Possibly after some consideration the company of fortune seekers concluded that the far west would be the most fertile ground to plant seeds of wealth. Accordingly the fortune seekers continued westward and after many difficulties, arrived in Honey Lake Valley, August 14, 1859.



Joseph Crawford Wemple



Eliza Jane (Christie) Wemple

Photographs taken near the time of their marriage, which was in Ingham County, Michigan, March 28th 1855.

The lake, and the valley, which at that time had not been named, was dry. People traveled across the lake bottom freely and in all directions. Young Wemple purchased a load of hay some time later in the Tules and hauled it across the dry lake bottom.

Wemple's first job was on Parker Creek at a saw mill – the second in the valley and the first one to receive power from a steam engine. At this location Wemple worked at carpentering, something that he had done in Michigan. He built a shelter over the mill and a house for the men.

The mill, according to Asa Merrill Fairfield, was purchased in Indian Valley by Ross Lewers and set up on the west branch of Parker Creek.

After a short time the mill was moved to what is now Reno and the present state of Nevada. Lewers claimed that this engine was the first one in the state and he blew the first whistle.

After Wemple ran out of work on Parker Creek he, in partnership with Judson Dakin, built the barn and house on Fulbright and Crawford's place – the building was still standing in 1915. The ranch was owned by J. L. Humphrey then.

During the trip across the continent with the wagon train in which his brother-in-law, Judson Dakin, was a member, Wemple, according to J. M. Guinn's History, was hit in the right eye, impairing the sight. Whatever the cause of the injury to the right eye, the injury was far more severe than Professor Guinn would lead one to believe – Wemple became so ill that he could no longer travel with the train and the train was in no position to stop – possibly because of scarcity of feed or water for the stock. Judson Dakin offered to stay with Wemple until he improved or died. Dakin had a light buggy and an excellent team of horses, so he expected no trouble catching the train.

Fortunately, Wemple's condition improved, for they, after a short time, caught up with the wagon train. Members of the Wemple family said that Joe Wemple was bit in the eye by a scorpion. He lost the sight of his right eye.

During the year of 1860, Wemple worked at various jobs. Following the Battle of Pyramid Lake, sometimes called the "Ormsby Massacre", in which General Ormsby was killed, a great deal of excitement and concern for the safety of the widely scattered white people was felt.

Consequently another battle, the Battle of the Truckee River, was fought. Two small forces from Honey Lake Valley were raised: one under Capt. William Weatherlow and the other under Capt. John Byrd. Both contingents proceeded toward the expected battle ground but arrived too late for the battle. Wemple had joined Capt. Byrd's group of twenty men.

During the entire year of 1860, according to Fairfield's Pioneer History, most of the activities were

directed towards the prevention of an Indian uprising – very little was done towards the commercial and economical development. There was some progress, however, in farm production and road improvement. No mention was made of an excessively hard winter.

The next year, however, two mills were constructed at what is now Milford.

Fairfield's History states that in 1861, J. C. Wemple and Judson Dakin built a board cabin about two hundred yards above the road. This estimated distance was one hundred yards too far south.

Fairfield also states that Wemple and Dakin commenced to get together the timbers for a grist mill which was finished in late October or early November. I can remember the old mill which during my early memory was no longer used to make flour but instead was used to grind feed for stock.

The mill had a forty or forty-five foot overshot water-power wheel which was powered by the water from Mill Creek through a high flume that took off about one hundred yards away on the high ground south-west of the mill. There was a millrace fifteen or twenty feet

deep that carried the water back into the creek. The mill was located about forty yards west of the creek.

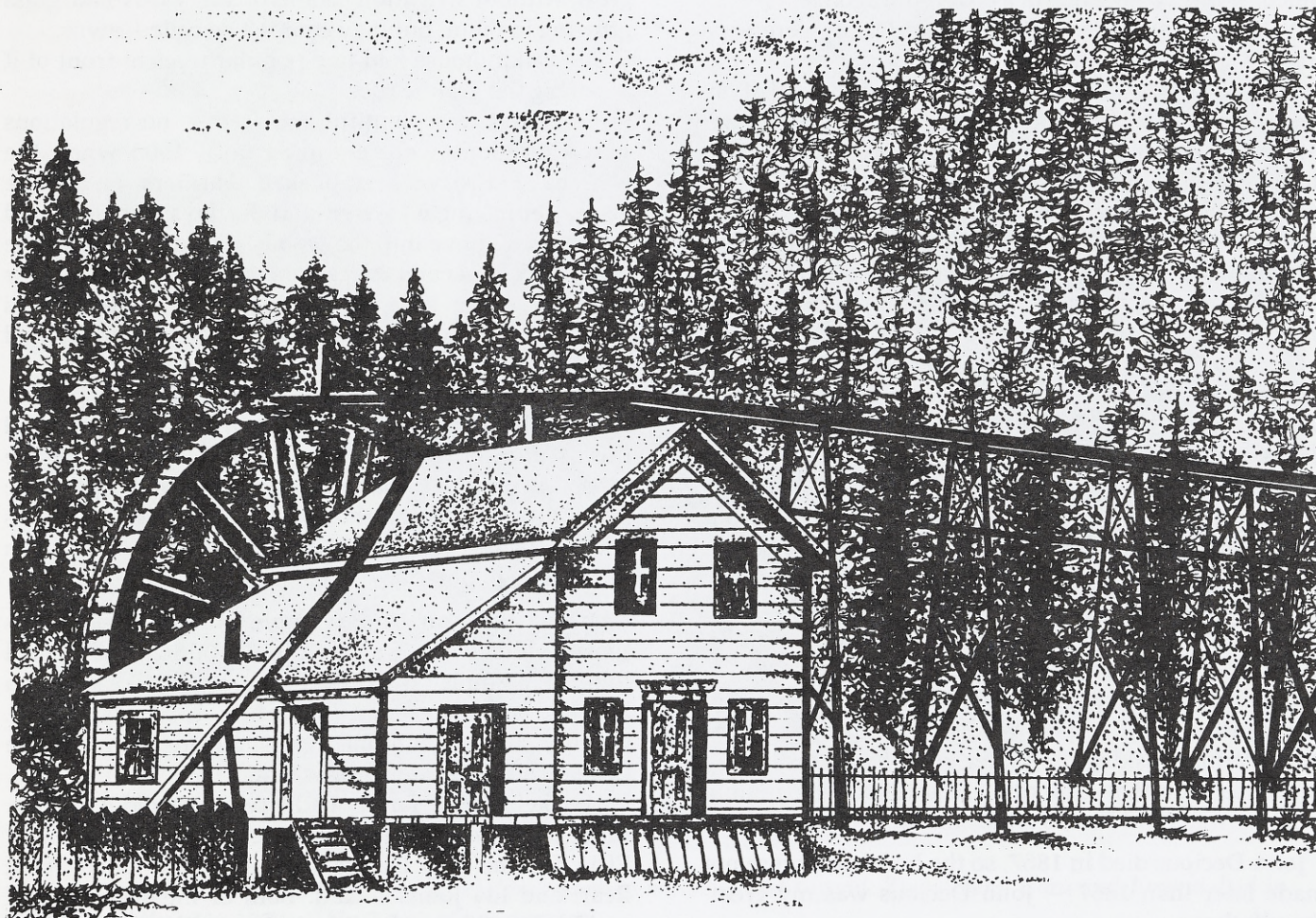
The Wemple family said that all of the gears, axle, and hubs were brought to Milford from Chico by pack mules except the mill stones, which were made by Peter Lassen at Vina, hauled to Susanville, and sold to E. V. Spencer, who sold them to Wemple and Dakin.

The mill was very successful from a financial point of view but it was also very dusty. In 1875, Dakin sold his interest to James M. Steinberger. He and Wemple carried on until 1878 when they sold to Hiram H. Dakin who ran the mill until 1882.

Hiram Dakin formed a partnership with J. D. Byers and H. E. McClelland and built a flour mill in Janesville.

While Judson Dakin was a partner of Wemple, a horse race meet was held in Susanville. Jud Dakin went to Susanville, according to my father, Jay C. Wemple, to the meet. After two or three days, he returned to Milford. When asked if he had lost any money, he answered "A little bit, about 500 dollars."

He evidently moved to Nevada, for his grandson,



The Grist Mill was built by Joseph C. Wemple and Judson Dakin in 1861. It was the first grist mill built in Lassen County. It continued to operate as a grist mill until 1882.

Morley Griswold, became governor of Nevada when the governor died. There was another grandson who worked in Lassen Co. for the Bureau of Land Management and bought a tract of land near Doyle for the deer herd.

The winter 1861-62 was the wettest one on record in California and equally wet in Honey Lake Valley. Water ran from Bald Mountain to the mountain west of the river, Fairfield states. This is the year that Mrs. J. C. Wemple came to California with her five-year-old daughter.

According to the Wemple family, Libby became very ill and begged for potato peeling to eat. At first she was refused, but finally the peeling was given to her and she commenced to get well. Potatoes are said to prevent scurvy.

Joseph drove as far east as Elko to meet the wagon train and bring his wife and daughter to Milford by a more comfortable and a faster means of travel. At that time he and Dakin were living in the board cabin which they had built. No doubt the cabin was not very spacious with two or three more people seeking shelter inside its doors, but at that time any shelter at all was welcome after a long trip in a covered wagon.

We are to assume that Wemple and Dakin were very busy in the flour mill for it was the only mill in the valley, but it required a great deal of work and flour dust was in the air and all over everything. (I was in the mill when a small boy after it was used for grinding stock feed) and then the water in the creek had to be held in a pond every night to insure sufficient water to operate the mills properly. The pond was nearly one half mile away from the mill and uphill.

After a matter of about two years, Wemple and Dakin found sufficient time to build two houses for their own homes. They were identical in size and shape, one south of the other and not far apart. They were painted white and made of about ten inch clapboards. There were two rooms upstairs, and all of the rooms were plastered. At that time horse hair was mixed into the plaster. There were decorations over the porches made of small wooden cubes which were quite attractive, and four square wooden columns supporting the roof of the porch.

Inside some of the furniture was made by John Decious, who came to California in 1863, from Iowa. He was a cabinet maker and among other things made two bedsteads for Joseph Wemple. I can recall Aunt Pearl Wemple asking "I wonder what happened to the two bedsteads that Grandpa Decious made Grandpa Joe?" Joe was Aunt Pearl's father-in-law.

John Decious died in 1867, so the bedsteads were not made later than 1867 – John Decious was my great-grandfather.

For domestic water and water for the stock, Wemple piped water from a spring in Fairchilds' field about one

hundred twenty-five yards south of Wemple's house which emptied into a large tank on the back porch. The overflow water was piped to another tank for the stock at the barn. At that time every family had a milk cow if it was within the means of the family. A cow could furnish nearly one half of the food necessary to keep a family in good health in case of a scarcity of other foods – milk to drink, butter, cottage cheese, cream for cereal, puddings, cakes, and berries. Milk was used a great deal in baking. Nearly all of the families had pigs and chickens. Some of them had sheep and goats. Turkeys were very common. If families had more of any commodity than they were able to use, anyone was free to sell that commodity. There were no restrictions, no penalties if anyone was gypped, that was his fault – buyers beware.

The Dakin house did not have running water, but had a well back of the house instead. Wemple's house had a picket fence around it and on the north and east there were rows of popular trees, slender and tall. There were two weeping willow trees, a large lilac, and various other shrubs, but no lawns. There were no lawns at Milford in the pioneer days unless the grass grew without irrigation. Some of the yards had grass growing in them, but they couldn't be called lawns.

The Dakin house had two popular trees in front of it and a big flat granite rock.

Fire wood was plentiful and free – no regulations nor restrictions were enforced until 1905 when the National Forest was established. Farmers, or anyone else, after haying was over, and the days were long and hot, used to move into the woods where the trees were easily accessible and the terrain suitable or possible for hauling a large load of wood and get their winter's supply of dry wood cut from green, straight grained trees.

Later, trees must be cut so many feet from the road, and still later, and now, only dry trees can be cut and this is allowed only in designated areas. While the pioneers endured many hardships that the people know little or nothing about, there were other customs and privileges that we have forever lost due to an increase in population, perhaps.

During the year that Wemple built his house, his second child, a son, was born July 30, 1864, and named John B. Wemple. A daughter, Cora, was born March 30, 1868 and a son, Jimmie, was born February 4, 1870. On July 26, 1870, Jimmie died and Cora followed him in death six days later, August 1st.

The Steinberger family had a two-year-old daughter, Effie, who was Cora's playmate. After Cora's death, Effie became very listless and her health failed, Aunt Pearl and Ida Johnson said. Both of the sisters, Pearl and Ida, were born six and seven years later than Effie, but they were first cousin to Effie. This story was handed down by their parents, who said that Effie

pined away until death took her.

About one year later, N. V. Wemple was born May 6, 1871.

Joseph Wemple, during the time that he was interested in the grist mill, which was a period of seventeen years, according to Pro. Guinn's autobiography, he did not enjoy the best of health. Prof. Guinn refers to Wemple's problem in this manner: "His health giving out, Mr. Wemple sold his interest in the mill and turned his attention to agriculture."

Louis Washburn seems to have owned a substantial acreage of land around Milford, for he sold some of it to L. P. Whiting and other parcels to J. C. Wemple. John Fitch also owned land on what is now the Wemple Ranch. By 1890, the Whiting heirs and J. C. Wemple owned practically 1000 acres of the present Wemple Ranch. However, in the beginning, I don't think J. C. Wemple's progress was very auspicious. He used to say "it's better to run a big business on a small scale than a small business on a big scale." From that, I take it, he

thought that it was advisable to watch your steps.

After the birth of N. V., on May 6, 1871, his family continued to grow. About N. V.'s name, a word of explanation is necessary. The letter "N" was his name and that is the only name by which he was known. The second letter was the same – he was named for Joseph's older brother, Nicholas Visscher. N said that often when he tried to clear up the nature of his name, he caused a great deal of confusion.

Jay C., the next child, the sixth, born March 31st, 1873, was named after his father as closely as possible without having the same name. However, his name was often signed J. C. Wemple, Jr. The next in order was Frank O., and as far as I know, he wasn't named for any member of the Wemple nor Christie families.

Orlo Edmund, born February 21, 1877, was the youngest one of the family, and often referred to as "The Kid". His mother put most of her reliance in Orlo when she wanted help or an errand run – Orlo was always willing to help his mother. Sometime in his youth, Orlo had scarlet fever and he lost part of his



The Joseph C. Wemple Family of six children grew to maturity and beyond. Two others, Cora and Jimmie died in early childhood in 1870 within 7 days of one another.

*Standing left to right: N. V., Frank O., Elizabeth J. (Libby), Jay C., John B.
Seated left to right: Eliza J., Orlo E., Joseph C. Circa 1900.*

hearing. Whatever happened to J. C. Wemple's hearing, I don't know, but my earliest memory of him, possibly 1900, when he was 69, he had poor hearing. He had a loss of four fingers, a loss of his right eye and a loss of part of his hearing, still he was highly successful. Prof. J. M. Guinn wrote about him – "He is one of the most intelligent and thriving farmers of the county, a man of strict integrity and high moral character, and is numbered among its most respected and valued citizens."

J. C. Wemple was unselfish beyond a fault and as far as his family was concerned, he displayed no selfish desires. He carried nor handled no money during the last ten years. He had a charge account at the Milford store which was paid by his four younger sons. He, however, during his life time, had carried a dime, so he would never be broke.

CHAPTER TWO

I think I am getting ahead of my story. I should be back in the late sixties or seventies, where peace and tranquility was broken by an act of violence – possibly not as often as it happens in the present era, but it happened. I am especially proud that J. C. Wemple's name was not mentioned unless it was in defence of some wronged person or innocent bystander.

In the summer of 1862 when J. C. Wemple and John C. Dakin had leased the Fairchilds and Washburn ranch property, Rough Elliott, who was the owner of the Humphrey Ranch, bought a reaper, the first in the valley. Wemple hired Elliott's reaper and his hired man, Hobbs, to reap a field of grain. After the field was finished, Wemple and Elliott could not agree on the number of acres that had been reaped. So they bet a sum of ninety dollars that the other man was wrong and each man agreed to hire two other men to settle the dispute over the size of the land. Wemple chose a man named Douglas, who had some education and Elliott picked Hobbs. The two decided in favor of Wemple. Elliott was deeply chagrined over the turn of event and commenced to scheme on a plan to recover his money and above all his prestige.

Elliott had become something of a hero to many of the pioneers. It all came about when Elliott was chosen to lead a posse of Honey Lake pioneers to Genoa, Nevada, to capture and punish the murderer of Henry Gordier who was pulled out of Susan River with rocks wired to his body.

The suspects of this murder were Bill Edwards and John Mullen. Elliott was friendly with these men and was included among the suspects. So the men who were about to organize themselves into a posse went after Elliott to lead the posse, but if he didn't, the posse would try to expose him also. Elliott agreed to the plan

which was a good one, as far as pioneer justice was concerned, for they hanged Lucky Bill Thorington of Genoa, Nev., captured Bill Edwards and brought him back to Richmond where he made a speech, confessed his guilt and said that he deserved to be hanged. The posse was not able to locate John Mullen, who was never found.

The plan that Elliott finally decided to follow was two foot races – both fakes. He and Hobbs both showed at Milford and decided to run a foot race to see who would buy the drinks for the crowd. Hobbs won, but Elliott pretended to be dissatisfied and wanted to run another race to decide who really was the better runner for a side bet of \$250.00. Hobbs agreed to run. Hobbs and Douglas had come into the valley together, so when Hobbs asked Douglas to put up the money for the side bet, Douglas thinking that Hobbs was honest gave Hobbs a note that he held against Fairchilds.

Elliott and Hobbs pretended to have a race and the latter asked Wemple to board him while he trained for the race. Elliott did not train at all and this aroused suspicion. When the race was finally run, Elliott finished first, but the fraud was so apparent that Douglas refused to pay his part of the wager.

Elliott then became so abusive that a fight followed. Elliott was knocked nearly down but recovered his balance and charged Douglas with a knife, slashing a four inch cut in his neck, and barely missing the jugular vein. The crowd then rushed in and separated the men.

Douglas was taken to Wemple's cabin with blood flowing freely. The bleeding was stopped by putting damp cotton covered with gun powder in the wound.

In the meantime, Elliott, who was afraid that Douglas might die, took to the woods and remained in hiding until Douglas recovered.

This story pointed out that J. C. Wemple was engaged in farming at this early date – the year that his wife and daughter came to California from Michigan.

During the early part of the 1860's there was considerable trouble with the Indians. Men were killed in Willow Creek Valley, Long Valley, Mud Flat and on the emigrant roads and in expedition against the raiding Indians. But at Milford, even during the Indian War in Nevada, which spread into Long Valley causing a great deal of fear when the people moved out of the valley and into Plumas County, not a great deal of concern was felt by the white people for their safety around Milford. During the Potato War in 1857 with the Washoe Indians, who had strayed away from their home territory, no white man was killed.

In 1858, Indians stole a yoke of oxen from Manley Thompson, who lived at the present location of Buntingville. A group of white men followed the Indians, but they lost the tracks of the Indians and never found the oxen. They found Indians fishing on Clark,

Creek near the junction of Last Chance Creek, however. Charles Crawford, the half owner of the Fulbright and Crawford ranch, the present Humphrey Ranch, was in this group and so was William N. Crawford, who was not related to Charles, but was later a son-in-law to John Decious, if not then. W. N. Crawford eventually settled on one of the Raker places.

Believing that by questioning the Indians about the whereabouts of Thompson's oxen, valuable time would be saved. The Indians probably knew nothing and were afraid and tried to get away, but one of the Indian men who failed to make his escape was badly wounded and sitting on a hillside. When Charles Crawford approached him riding a mule, the Indian shot an arrow nearly through his body. Crawford was taken into the valley where he died. He was buried in the small cemetery just above Blickenstaff's chicken houses.

Evidently, Crawford's death is the one that Thomas B. Doyle referred to when he said: "The people were so healthy that Indians had to shoot one of them to start a cemetery."

Although J. C. Wemple was not connected with this episode in any way – it happened the year before Wemple came to California – it is related to show that the Indians around Milford were not hostile, nor were they known to do a great deal of pilfering.

Besides, long before my time, the Indians had lived in peace with the white people of Milford. Just back of the Dakin house the Indians had what the white people called campoopees. They were actually wigwams.

Both of the Wemple and Decious families were friendly with the Indians and both were accused of being part Indian. Neither of my parents had brown eyes and both had very fair skins, but dark brown hair. N. V. was the lone exception – his hair was light and his beard red. The Decious family had brown hair and eyes usually, but Joseph had red hair.

Charles Crawford's death was the only death to a white man caused by an Indian near Milford but the Indian was only trying to defend himself. I do not recall hearing nor reading about many people from the Milford area who followed the Indians to punish them for raids except Capt. Byrd at Bird Flat, Billy Clark at the Clark Ranch, Joe Epstein who lived above El Gringo, and William N. Crawford who lived on one of the Raker places. Rough Elliott seemed to have liked to fight and anyone would do, it need not be an Indian. He was also one of the leaders in the Sage Brush War and the Tax Rebellion.

J. C. Wemple's aspirations when he arrived in Honey Lake Valley over one hundred twenty-five years ago were not known, but no doubt four years later when his brother-in-law, James Christie, came to Milford single, his plans expanded to file on land at Eagleville, Modoc County, with his brother-in-law as his partner.

Sometime after James Christie came to Honey Lake Valley he married Jane (Decious) Taylor, who was divorced from her first husband.

There is no data available to me of the time that J. C. Wemple and James Christie filed a claim on the land in Eagleville, but it could not have been earlier than 1864, one year after the wagon train arrived with Christie, nor later than 1868 when James and Jane were living on the Eagleville ranch and the first son, John, was born.

My father has told me of Christie and Wemple's plan to file a claim on this land and to develop it into farm land.

The two men left Milford with two four-horse wagons loaded with whatever they thought would be needed to make the trip and start the development of a farm or ranch. There were no roads after leaving Madeline Plains, possibly near Ravendale. The course was then almost due north until Christie and Wemple arrived at Eagleville. The trip was very difficult and a rough one. When the two men arrived at Eagleville, they had the front wheels of one wagon connected to the rear wheels of the other. They had left one-half of both wagons by the wayside.

Joseph Wemple returned to Milford to take care of his business and more than likely James Christie returned also for more supplies, for there was nothing on the land when they made the first trip. All that is available is in Prof. J. M. Guinn's History and the story that Jay C. Wemple told me.

Guinn said that James Christie settled on the Eagleville ranch, but he did not mention that J. C. Wemple owned a half interest. He further states that the Jim and Jane Christie family lived on this ranch until 1876 when he became very ill and moved back to Michigan, hoping that the change would improve his health.

Here the Christie family lived for two years with very discouraging results. Instead of improving, his condition steadily worsened. So, no doubt, with the money that he realized from the sale of the Eagleville ranch completely gone, due to crossing to Michigan, and then after two years of failure, back to Milford, he and his family were in deep trouble.

James Christie's family lived in a house directly above the Dakin house and about fifty or sixty yards from the Wemple house.

Jane Christie, while the children were young, had a very difficult time caring for her husband and children. On one occasion when the county taxes had not been paid and the county officers were planning on legal action to collect the taxes. J. C. Wemple wrote a letter to the county officers, protesting their action and explaining the true financial trouble of the family. Evidently, Wemple's letter was effective for the Christies were never evicted.

Joseph Crawford Wemple was extremely interested in politics, and this interest carried over to three members of his family, Libby Harris, N. V. Wemple and Frank O. Wemple. The others were only mildly interested.

Frank O. Wemple probably held an office longer than anyone in the family.

I do not think that Frank had such an inborn interest as Libby and N. V., but he saw it as a way to make a living.

As far as my father was concerned, about anyone who had a thriving business, a political office was a diverting and costly addition to his prime purpose of life. But to others it was the prestige and honor of winning an election that counted.

J. C. Wemple was elected assessor of Lassen County and held the office for six consecutive years. The assessor at that time did not have the help that the assessor does today. I believe that one of his jobs was appraising all property. There was a poll tax to collect also, which was fixed and an equal tax on all men – the women did not pay a poll tax.

J. C. Wemple used a prized horse to tour the county while he was assessor. The horse was named Bally and was very faithful. Wemple made long rides between towns and ranches and was often caught out in the wide open spaces where he had to spend the night. On such occasions, he turned his horse loose without a picket or hobbles, the horse free to roam the surrounding country-side and only on one occasion did the horse leave him.

During the time that Wemple was assessor he was pretty well established in farming and he also had a half interest in the flour mill with J. M. Steinberger, and although all of his sons were at that time (1869-1875) too young to realize how difficult it was to keep three projects going at once, they and Jane must have missed the father and husband.

For three years longer Wemple and Steinberger ran the flour mill. At this time Wemple's oldest son, John, had grown into a strapping boy of fourteen years with an insatiable desire to work with horses.

John Doyle, in his diary, told of young Johnny Wemple coming to his ranch at Doyle to pick up saddle horses to break to ride. J. C. Wemple said of his son, John: "He will do anything in the world for you if a horse is mixed up in the deal."

Libby Wemple, about the year 1873, married Thomas Harris. She, as previously stated, was J. C. Wemple's oldest child, and seventeen years old, or about that age.

Thomas Harris after a shaky start as a young married man, finally settled down in Elko. Thomas and Libby had four children: Joe and Ray were the boys, Cora and Jessie were the girls. Joe was sheriff of Elko County

from 1906 until many years later, possibly until death.

In the early pioneer days there were very few fences and the fences that were first used, were hurriedly set up and often were made of long strings of rawhide or buckskin held in place by stakes or posts. Poles were used, also, where they were available. Often big three or four foot pine trees were felled to make pasture fences and the spaces between filled with limbs or brush.

Rails, however, were more commonly used, probably since the beginning of farming. J. C. Wemple's place was fenced with rails eventually. A rail, as rails were made in pioneer days, were nine feet long and about six inches through and split from pine or fir trees, either the red or white fir around Milford. The trees were split – that is the nine foot cuts were split the first time by drilling a one inch hole into the center of the log, packed with gun powder and set off, resulting in the log splitting apart into two equal halves. The halves were then split with wedges or mauls. Cedar trees were used in some locations.

The cost of a rail was five cents for splitting and five cents for hauling. The cost of a mile of rail fence was about 525 dollars for the rails and perhaps an equal amount for laying the rails making a cost of over 1000 dollars per mile. Rock fences were also built in rocky country.

One of the rail splitters was Al Wilbur. He had a partner who worked with him usually, but I can't recall his name. He probably had more than one helper. In any event, Wilbur and his partner had sawed down a tree. They were limbing the tree and had all of the limbs cut off except two, which were holding the tree four or five feet off the ground. Wilbur was about to chop one of the limbs off, apparently oblivious to the danger of the tree falling on him, but it did fall and right across Wilbur's midsection. Wilbur was on his back with not more than one and a half to two inches of space between the ground and the log.

The helper needed a shovel but there was none closer than Fairchilds' house, a distance of three-eighths of a mile. The helper ran down for the shovel and back in time to dig Wilbur out from under the log. I don't know how badly Wilbur was injured, but the person who told the story gave the impression that he was only slightly injured. Today it would be a fine opportunity for a lawsuit. Wilbur was a tall and very thin man.

Wilbur was T. H. Fairchilds' son-in-law, the man who had a half interest in the first sawmill at Milford. T. H. Fairchilds later became the sole owner of the sawmill when Fairchilds and Washburn, the other partner in 1863, divided their property. Fairchilds' part was the land above the rock pile just opposite Jack Morgan's house, which included the sawmill. Washburn's was north of the rock pile.

Fairchilds died April, 1880 – evidently he had run



Tom and Libby Harris' wedding picture. They were married in Milford on December 24, 1873. She was the daughter of Joseph C. Wemple. Soon after they were married they moved to Fort Collins, Colorado. Eventually they moved to Elko, Nevada. They lived out their lives in Elko.

the sawmill until that date, a period of nineteen years. Following T. H. Fairchilds' death, Joseph C. Wemple was appointed administrator of the estate. Fairchilds left a wife and several children.

I now have J. C. Wemple's account book in which he kept a record of every transaction that took place during the period of time that was necessary to clear up the estate. Some of the transactions are interesting from a cost point of view compared with the present day inflated prices.

For instance: Wemple drove to Susanville and back home, a distance of fifty miles, repeatedly for eight dollars. He had to find lodging and food for over night, because he would not have enough time to transact his business – the trip alone took eight hours on the road.

Interest of 1½ percent was charged on loans – a coffin for 16.00 dollars – a trip to Susanville to prove the will and receive appointment as administrator, 8.00 dollars – one day appraising property 2.00 dollars – county taxes on home ranch 64.54 dollars.

The whole estate was settled from June 10, 1881 to June 3, 1882.

One year later, March 29, 1883, J. C. Wemple's oldest son, John, married Abigail Winslow. Prof. J. M. Guinn said that John helped his father in the development of his ranch during the time following John's marriage until 1889. There is only a short account of John Wemple's working for his father. The men usually employed were Arthur or Frank Van Cleave.

John Wemple did a great deal of logging for the sawmill at Milford at different times. During the time between 1885 in November until March 29, 1886 when J. C. Wemple built a large horse barn, the sawmill under C. A. Loomis sawed all of the lumber. For the timbers, which were all hand hewed, F. A. (Al) Wilbur was chosen to do the job. Other carpenters were John E. Jellison and Frank Vannetter.

Nearly all of the logs for the sawmill were cut off land that had not been claimed by anyone, and whoever was running the sawmill after T. H. Fairchilds died in 1880, did not own all of the land from which the trees were harvested.

Fairchilds had at an early date, filed a claim on the mountain south of his mill, but the logical conclusion is, after a year or two that all of the saw logs had been cut off the claim. In any event, the log chutes over which the logs were slid to a landing near the mill were extended to the top of the mountain west of Mill Creek Canyon.

Grandpa Wemple concluded, that since John was hauling logs from land the mill did not own, it probably would be better if he filed a claim on some of the land. So he filed a claim on a forty, supposing the land was in a location where the trees were being harvested, but his forty acres turned out to be on an inaccessible peak a mile away eighty years later.

I have heard that the early homestead laws required the homesteaders to plant apple trees before a title to the land would be issued. This possibly accounts for the great number of apple trees around the valley. J. C. Wemple, while at first, didn't own a great deal of land, he sold large quantities of fruit and vegetables out of his orchard and garden.

Included in his varieties of fruit, were pears, apples, plums, peaches, cherries, apricots, blackberries, currants red and white, and gooseberries. Some of the old apple trees were still alive a few years ago and may still be.

There was a story about the currants which grew in J. C. Wemple's orchard, which was handed down by different members of Joseph's family. John learned at an early age how he could turn the currants into wine and at this particular venture he became very adept. But the results of the wine making was not as satisfying to his father and mother as they were to John. John Wemple, after his brother-in-law, Tom Harris, became well established in the Huntington Valley, Nevada, used to ride on horseback to Huntington Valley in remarkable short time, and if his horse became tired, he would trade him for another horse. John spent considerable time on the ranch with Tom's brother, Dan.

The first generation of Joseph and Jane's children was only half finished when their grandchildren commenced coming. Libby, who was born April 23, 1856, gave birth to a baby about 1876. The baby was named Cora. Then in 1878, according to Libby's granddaughter, Ruthe Gallagher, Joseph Harris saw the light of day. Libby Harris gave birth to two more children, Ray and Jessie.

Among Joseph C. Wemple's children who were born about the time of the Harris children or possibly a year before Cora was born, was N. V. and Jay C., Frank O. and Orlo E. followed.

John and Abigail's first child, Ina, was born late in 1883. John had six children so that made ten grandchildren for Joseph and Jane. N. V. and Pearl had seven children – the first one, Orville, the second, Guy, and the third, Fred were all older than John's last, Myrtle.

John's older children were: Ina, Edmund, Laurence, Gladys, and Earl. N. V.'s were, after the three mentioned above, Lyle, Maude, Percy and Bernice.

Jay C.'s children came in this order: Libby (Decious) Wemple left these notes in a small note book – "Our first baby born Thursday, December 6, 1894; Claude Clement Wemple, born Thursday, April 3, 1896; Olga, born Monday, September 13, 1897; Hazel, born Monday, August 7, 1899; Joseph Irvin, born Monday, December 24, 1900; Marjel, born Thursday, March 10, 1904; Raymond Jay, born Thursday, October 2, 1907; Marguerite, born Sunday, September 12, 1909; Deesse, born Sunday, September 17, 1911; Lowell, born



Jay C. and Libby Decious Wemple

Sunday, August 3, 1913; Neil Waldon born Tuesday, February 26, 1918." The first child died at birth and the mother, Libby, had a close call – she was advised never to have another child, but ten more followed. She had medium height, but weighted only about one hundred five pounds.

They were married Feb. 17, 1894 and lived their entire married life in Milford. Libby moved from Lake City, Calif., with her parents in a covered wagon in 1884 when she was nine. Jay C. was born in Milford in 1873. They were married for 46 years. Jay C. died April 13, 1940. Libby followed Jay in death 20 years later on June 4, 1960.

The next in order was Frank O. Wemple and Bessie (Theodore) Wemple – only one child, Paul, was born to this union in 1901. He was the first Wemple child born in the Skinner house where Jay C. and Libby lived from 1903 until 1936 – 33 years. Claude and Henrietta lived there for 48 years. Six of Jay and Libby's children were born in this house. Orlo and Erma were childless.

Joseph Wemple was alive when his last grandchild was born but Jane, his wife, who preceeded her husband in death by twelve years, was not alive when six of her grandchildren were born, but this is not uncommon. Many children do not have four grandparents – some children do not have any grandparents. The Wemple grandchildren were strung out over a period of forty-six years.

CHAPTER THREE

My story of Joseph Crawford Wemple sort of ran away with itself when I commenced writing of Joe and Jane's grandchildren. I should be back in the early 1870s.

Joe Wemple crossed the plains twice – the last time to borrow money from a relative, Ed Wessell. What information I have was given to me by Bessie Wemple. She also gave me a picture of Ed Wessell, which must be more than one hundred years old.

Some time after Joseph Wemple commenced to acquire farm land, he had about three fortys or one hundred twenty acres that bordered Jerry Tyler's land with the fence lines running east and north or west and south, but not on a straight line to the lake. Wemple who was anxious to acquire more land offered to trade some of his land for Tyler's. Evidently this was agreeable to Tyler, for according to the story handed down by the Wemple family, the trade was consummated.

Wemple must have received more land than Tyler, for according to Bessie Wemple, Tyler sold land to Joseph Wemple and Joseph did not have the money to

pay for the extra land so he went back to Mason, Michigan, to borrow enough money to pay for the land. I presume it was Mason for that is where the picture was taken of Ed Wessell.



Ed Wessell, husband of Margaret Wemple Wessell. Margaret was a younger sister of Joseph C. Wemple. Ed Wessell loaned Joseph C. Wemple money to buy property in Milford.

The foregoing paragraph is probably incorrect, for I have a list of deeds to farm land that were made to Joseph C. Wemple. There were nineteen in the 1870s-1880s. There were two instances where J. C. Wemple filed claims on United States Government land. But there wasn't one word where he had been deeded any land by Jerry Tyler.

However, Wemple did exchange land with Tyler for the fence line is the proof as well as the family story of the trade.

I have been uncertain about the time that J. C. Wemple went back to Michigan to borrow money from Ed Wessell to buy land from F. A. Washburn, L. B. Washburn, Hosea A. Bronson, and John E. Fitch, but I have concluded that it was in 1870 or '71.

In the early days of J. C. Wemple's farm life, he was in the mercantile business, judging from the amount of goods that he sold off the farm. Hay was the principal

commodity and the most profitable, but he sold vegetables, fruit, meat, fresh and cured, eggs, lumber and other articles. He kept a hotel in food, or at least part of the food.

One of J. C. Wemple's grandsons, Laurence, said that his grandfather at a time, over a period of years, had ten or fifteen thousand dollars lying around the house. This could well have been the case, but it must have happened while J. C. Wemple was running the flour mill, for the flour mill was highly profitable before other mills were built.

In 1873, a panic swept the nation due to inflation caused by the Civil War, according to an encyclopedia – The Progressive Reference Library. That panic was further enhanced by legislation which partially destroyed the monetary function of silver.

No doubt the panic didn't root down as deeply in the west as in the populous eastern states, but it must have had some undesirable effect. J. C. Wemple purchased

some of his land, forty acres, for as much as 100 dollars per acre, so there was considerable money involved.

Possibly, Ed Wessell saw the specter of a panic emerging from the dark recesses of hard times and wished to place his money in a safer place – western land. In any event, J. C. Wemple chose to purchase land at the most inopportune time.

I did not intend to cast any aspersion on the accuracy of the statement of Aunt Bessie Wemple when she said that Joe Wemple bought land from Jerry Tyler, for he may have, but there is nothing to show in all of the deeds he bought land from Tyler. I think one of Joseph's sons, knowing of the Tyler deal misinformed Bessie for she was very reliable and intelligent.

During the period that J. C. Wemple was buying all of his land or shortly before, to be exact, the county was experiencing the heaviest rainfall. The year 1865 may have been the wettest year and in 1868 the lake (Honey Lake) had twenty or twenty-five feet more



This is the house of Ed and Margaret Wessel in Waterloo, Mich. Circa 1880. Lady pictured is unknown, however it is possible she is Ed's wife, Margaret, sister of Joseph C. Wemple.

water than any other period of time.

About that time people commenced to build hay barns. I can remember five hay barns and two more that could have been used for hay on the Wemple ranch.

Asa Merrill Fairfield, the historian, has this to say about Honey Lake - Approximately on June 1, 1868, the Sage Brush, the county newspaper printed the following: - "This body of water is said to be from twenty to twenty-five feet deeper than ever previously known. The land about the lake for an extent of a mile is inundated and the lake is still rising."

This, perhaps, would account for the rail fence along the lake shore being so far inland about 1900 on J. C. Wemple's ranch, before it was moved one hundred yards nearer the lake - the fence then, in places, was 300 yards from the lake.

I don't think that J. C. Wemple or any of the ranchers around the lake did very much spring plowing. What little plowing that took place was probably done in the fall or after the 15th of May.

The people in the valley at the time that Lassen County was being settled had to deal with the vagaries of the weather, and J. C. Wemple and his family were no exception. They had to live, for the greater part, on food produced in the valley. For some reason the winters from 1857-60 until 1895 were more severe than the winters from 1895 to the present time. But in spite of this, there never was a complete fruit crop failure until 1916 when all of the alfalfa and the fruit froze in the middle of May. Joseph C. Wemple said that year was the only year when all of the fruit was frozen.

Land deeded to J. C. Wemple during the 1870s and 1880s.

Nov. 2, 1874 - F. A. Washburn to J. C. Wemple.

July 10, 1872 - USA to J. C. Wemple.

Feb. 24, 1872 - John Fitch to J. C. Wemple.

Feb. 4, 1879 - John Fitch, an undivided one half interest in the land and an undivided half interest in the flow of Mill Creek.

Jan. 7, 1881 - L. B. Washburn to J. C. Wemple, an undivided half interest in the land, a right of way for the old John Fitch ditch; all appurtenances.

March 23, 1873 - Hosea A. Bronson to J. C. Wemple. Recorded one day later.

Parcel 22G - July 10, 1872 - USA to J. C. Wemple.

Parcel 22C - Nov. 2, 1874 - J. M. Steinberger to J. C. Wemple.

Dec. 21, 1889 - Estate of L. P. Whiting to Suffany W. Skinner.

Parcel 22E - Feb. 24, 1872 - John Fitch to J. C. Wemple.

Parcel 22F - Feb. 4, 1879 - John E. Fitch to J. C. Wemple.

Parcel 22G - Feb. 4, 1879 - John E. Fitch to J. C. Wemple.

Parcel 22H - Feb. 4, 1879 - John E. Fitch to J. C. Wemple.

Parcel 22J - Dec. 16, 1898 - Mrs. L. W. Skinner to N. V. Wemple, J. C. Wemple, Jr., F. O. Wemple, and O. E. Wemple.

Parcel L - Jan. 7, 1881 - L. B. Washburn to J. C. Wemple.

Parcel 22R - Feb. 4, 1879 - John E. Fitch to J. C. Wemple - one half interest.

Parcel 23A - Nov. 2, 1874 - J. M. Steinberger to J. C. Wemple.

Parcel 23G - Nov. 2, 1874 - J. M. Steinberger to J. C. Wemple.

Parcel 23E - Feb. 24, 1872 - John E. Fitch to J. C. Wemple.

Parcel 23H - Feb. 4, 1879 - John E. Fitch to J. C. Wemple.

Parcel 23J - Feb. 4, 1879 - John E. Fitch to J. C. Wemple.

Parcel 25 - Nov. 2, 1874 - J. M. Steinberger to J. C. Wemple.

Parcel 26 - Nov. 2, 1874 - J. M. Steinberger to J. C. Wemple.

My conclusion to this condition was: The winters were colder with more snow, so the spring came later, resulting in a later bloom and less chance of a frosty night. The fruit and vegetables that the pioneers of Lassen County raised were all that they had. The families were busy at harvesting time canning, drying, preserving, pickling fruit and vegetables, and making jelly. Nearly every family had a dugout where potatoes, vegetables, and possibly pears were stored. The potatoes lasted until the next crop came on, but when apples were gone there were no more apples until the early apples ripened next August. The families buried cabbage and roots. Nearly every family had a huge barrel of sauerkraut. J. C. Wemple made a barrel for each one of his sons, and I suppose a smaller amount for himself in his later years. Until the late 1920 every family had one or two hogs to slaughter just before Christmas time. One family used to slaughter as many as thirty. J. C. Wemple, while his family was growing, fattened hogs on cooked grain, squash and cabbage, usually.

The pigs usually were raised on the waste from the kitchen including the dish water, and the milk not needed after the cream had been skimmed off the pans. Pork, potatoes, fruit, bread and butter were the chief staples on the family table.

As time passed more and more food was hauled into the county, but a great deal more was taken out of the county than was ever brought into it until the last few

years beginning with the advent of chain stores of every name. Markets were available for Honey Lake Valley produce in Virginia City, all over Sierra Valley, in other locations in Nevada, and a good many places in Honey Lake where the soil was not suitable for raising fruit and vegetables.

I do not think that J. C. Wemple ever peddled fruit or vegetables, but he did sell large quantities at his ranch as previously stated.

Among those who did peddle fruit and vegetables were Sam Downing, George Wales, J. M. Doyle Sr., Jerry Tyler and his sons. Downing raised a large family by truck and fruit farming and accumulated enough land to develop a large alfalfa ranch – at present, the Bud Price ranch. George Harwood followed truck farming as a livelihood, beginning about 1889 or 1890 and lasting until he, too, purchased an additional 470 acres.

So one can plainly understand that the pioneers during J. C. Wemple's early life had plenty of food in the valley, which was not true of the rest of the United States, especially the South during the Civil War and the Panic of 1873.

CHAPTER FOUR

The expression was sometimes heard that men came west to avoid the law, or they didn't want to take any part in the Civil War. As far as being law abiding, the pioneers set a record which carried over until the 1930s. One thing that they were strongly against was law breakers, and if there were any among them who had a disregard for the laws of the land from which the pioneer migrated, they usually left the country or mended their ways. There was no law in Lassen County except the law of self defense at first. Gradually the county became organized and laws were put into effect that were similar to the laws of the east. As far as J. C. Wemple was concerned regarding the law, he lived his entire life without a black mark against his record, as well as ninety-five percent of the other pioneers.

For example, there were very few police officers in the county. There was a sheriff and a deputy, while Susanville had a town marshal with one or more night watchmen, even after it had grown to a town of 5000 or more.

As far as the war was concerned, most of the pioneers came here after the war had been going on for two or three years and were men with families. Some came from the South and some from the North. There was a little feeling between the two factions, but nothing serious. One or two attempts were made at recruiting with little results, according to Merrill Fairfield.

Although J. C. Wemple came west before the war started, I doubt that he could possibly have been admitted to the Union forces because of four missing fingers on his right hand. The big attraction to the West was a new frontier and gold. I have just reviewed part of Fairfield's Pioneer History to check the accuracy of my foregoing story about crime in early Lassen County history. In 1856 there were two deaths in the drowning of Isadore Meyerwitz and his Indian wife in Honey Lake while taking a boat or raft ride.

The veracity of this story as related to Fairfield is indeed questionable. In the first place the lake was only waist-deep, not deep enough for anyone to lose his life by drowning, and in the second place, their bodies were never recovered.

If you do not know who Meyerwitz was it is well to learn that he was Lassen's closest friend.

A man named McClay was killed by an Indian while trying to recover his stolen stock. I have told of Charles Crawford's death by an Indian in 1858. Peter Lassen and his companion, Clapper, were shot out at the Black Rock Desert in 1859 while on a prospecting trip. These deaths were also shrouded with mystery according to Lassen's closest friends. Henry Gordier's death, as previously told, happened in 1858.

This all took place before J. C. Wemple came to the valley, and in only a minor way relates to Wemple's life after he arrived in Honey Lake Valley. It does show something of the political atmosphere or lack of political atmosphere, in any form that prevailed at that time. There were two other deaths at that time – one, John Mote, a halfbreed Cherokee Indian, who was found dead on the mountain back of Susanville with his remains badly decomposed. The other, Van Hickey, who was said to have been a sort of renegade, was shot in the back by his partner.

The foregoing accounts for nine deaths over a period of four years – the only known deaths that could have been caused by criminal acts. Two deaths – Dr. McClay and Charles Crawford were caused by Indians. Dr. McClay's death, however, was caused by the treachery of an Indian. Charles Crawford's death, however, was caused by the treachery of white men, or perhaps one or two in the group who shot up the Indian who shot Crawford.

Four deaths were shrouded in mystery in my opinion: they were the death of Isadore Meyerwitz and his Indian wife, and Peter Lassen and the man known as Clapper. Gordier and Van Hickey were murdered by white men – the people guilty of Gordier's death were executed, but the man who killed Van Hickey escaped punishment of any kind – even an investigation.

John Mote, the half-breed, whose remains were found on the mountain back of Susanville, was identified by the bear claws on his coat which were

used for buttons.

Of these nine deaths, only two can be attributed to murder, but there probably were more — in my opinion four more. But the great majority of the people who came west were law abiding and peace loving.

The sense of justice runs high in many people but very seldom or never completely above self interest, for selfishness is the first law of self preservation. In spite of the first law of self preservation, it is difficult to understand why the white settlers treated the Indians so shabbily, often criminally. The rightful inhabitants of the land were pushed back by the relentless coming and crowding of the white settlers.

Many of the pioneers had a friendly attitude toward the Indians and tried to preserve peace with them. They sought the chiefs of the tribes and signed treaties and for three or four years there was not a great deal of violence. But what does a treaty of peace mean to people who didn't know of the treaty? Nothing! So by 1859-60, there was open warfare. This was J. C. Wemple's first winter in Honey Lake Valley as originally stated, and except for his military action on the Truckee River east of Reno under Captain John Byrd, there is no record that at any time he was involved with Indian trouble.

During that time J. C. Wemple (1869-1875) served as assessor of Lassen County. He rode on horseback from one end of the county to the other — only nine years after the Battle of Pyramid Lake and the Battle of the Truckee River. During all of this time Wemple was not armed, for I heard him say that — "I never carried a gun, I was afraid I might shoot someone." Evidently, he was more or less unconcerned about his own well-being. This time in the history of Lassen County was not a time of peace and tranquillity, but quite the opposite. The last five years of the 1860s were filled with Indian troubles. The Pearson massacre occurred in 1868.

There was a saying among the old pioneers which was often repeated, and which some of them must have believed to be the truth — it was: "The only good Indian is a dead Indian." This might be said of anyone with some degree of truth for a dead person can no longer sin nor make mistakes.

I wonder what the white people would have done if they had been in the Indian's situation. No food, no clothing, little shelter, with only a scant chance of getting anything that was most needed.

Fairfield in his pioneer history has this to say of the plight of the Indians during the winter of 1859-60: "The Indians of the Truckee Meadows are freezing and starving to death by scores. In one cabin the governor found three children dead or dying. The whites are doing all they can to alleviate the miseries of the poor Washoes. They have sent out and built fires for them, and offered them part of their provisions. But in many

instances the starving Indians refused to eat, fearing that the food is poisoned. They attribute the severity of the winter to the whites. The Truckee River is frozen hard enough to bear up loaded teams." This excerpt was taken from the Territorial Enterprise, and the governor mentioned was Governor Roop of Lassen County.

My Grandfather Decious, who came west in 1863 and Grandmother Decious, who was born in California in 1854, had different reasons for the demise of the Indians in general; The Indians had lived off the land with very little of the necessities of life as we know them. There was no grain in the valley before the white people came, consequently no cereal nor flour; there was no corn here, although it was used by eastern Indians; there were no hogs, chickens, turkeys, goats, sheep or cattle. Horses were not a native of America, nor were donkeys, although in time they became prevalent.

There were a good many wild animals and birds. The only vegetables were wild onions, potatoes, garlic and perhaps a few others. The main staples of the Honey Lake Valley Indians, the Piauxes and Maidus, were acorns and game animals, fish or birds. In the Ruby Valley, Nevada, the Shoshones used wild rye seeds and game as the main source of food. Usually in most locations there is wild fruit.

Definitely, the unhealthful factors, according to my grandparents, were an excessive consumption of sugar and flour, something that the Indians had never had, and the diseases of the white people, for which the Indians had little or no immunity. My grandparent thought the Indian population was reduced as much as sixty-six percent.

In spite of all of these hardships, I have never heard that the Indians around Milford, or Mata, as the Indian called the village, endured any such hardship. How long fifteen or twenty of them lived seventy yards from J. C. Wemple's house I do not know, but I never heard of any such hardship endured by the Indians at Milford as I have just related, nor have I ever heard of any hostility on the part of either the Indians or the white people.

A good illustration of the general relationship of the Indians and white people can be shown by the answer of an old Indian, Frank Joaquin, when I asked him: "How old are you Frank?" "You know Frank Wemple?" "Yes, he is my uncle." "When I was a little boy, I used to play with Frank — I am his age."

Frank Wemple was born in 1875.

The Indians, as I remember them, had given up dressing in buckskin clothing. I suppose rabbit skins for robes and blankets were used also, but after the coming of the white settlers, the deer herd was greatly reduced, and it is very doubtful if the Indians could get enough deer skin to cloth themselves.

They dressed similar to white people – the women wore loose fitting dresses, usually of a dark shade of gingham and a bandana handkerchief tied around their heads. The men also dressed much like white men. The women wore a blanket for a coat or cape. I think the blanket was used as part of the bedding, also.

However, when the white people first came, the Indian men, according to Irvin Decious, especially the Paiutes, wore nothing but a breechcloth and were rather belligerent. The Maidus were more friendly and never seemed to be looking for trouble.

CHAPTER FIVE

Time passed from the 50s, 60s and 70s to the 80s and the last of J. C. and Jane's children had reached an age of three. Orlo, the youngest, often called the "Kid" by his older brothers, or Billy, was stricken with scarlet fever which left him with poor hearing. If the rest of the family had scarlet fever, none of them suffered any debilitating effect. But the raising of a family is always accompanied by various and unexpected accidents – Jay had a broken jaw which left a scar on his face, while Frank had a broken right elbow which he was unable to bend after the accident. There probably were other accidents of which I have no knowledge, but if there were, there were no telltale effects.

They were sort of a rough and ready family of boys who cussed freely when working outside, but never inside their mother's house. Orlo, the youngest, was always willing to run errands for his mother and was probably the most even tempered. He was also the most athletic. N. V. was very quick tempered, but he had a high sense of responsibility and justice. Jay C. was very even tempered, but his brothers said of him, "If he gets mad, look out for him." Frank seemed less inclined to become very angry than any, except Orlo. Both Orlo and Frank were very saving. John was friendly and liked to visit more than the other brothers. He and Jay C. would sit on a fence, talk horse, whittle sticks and chew tobacco with scarcely a lull in any of these activities, except when one of them completely whittled his stick away. Then the stickless whittler would jump down from the fence, find another stick, climb back on the fence and renew all of these activities with more vehemence than ever.

I don't know whatever happened to the art of whittling – one seldom sees anyone whittle now. Joseph C. Wemple used to spend much of his idle time whittling.

When John was fifteen or sixteen years old – about 1879 or 1880, he spent a good deal of his time breaking saddle horses to ride. According to John Doyle's diary,

Johnny Wemple made frequent trips to Doyle to get young saddle horses to ride until they were pretty well trained for riding. According to Abby, his wife, John was a very good rider.

N. V. was more studious than the other boys. But there were very few advantages in education except the public schools at that time. If anyone wanted to become a school teacher or a public accountant, the teacher would help this person carry on his studies until the person referred to had become knowledgeable enough to pass a teacher's examination or be qualified to keep books. N. V. Wemple, however, went to the San Jose State Normal for additional education.

I can recall three teachers who graduated from public grammar school of Lassen County before the time of high schools. They were Thomas Wilbur, Bill Packwood, and Ernest Smith.

My mother's sister, Myrtle Decious, was studying to become a teacher under her aunt Hattie Dickinson, when Hattie died. Myrtle had not passed the teacher's examination, but the trustees hired her to finish the term. This was in 1896.

The secret aspiration of many young people probably are never known. I doubt Jay C. Wemple ever aspired to be any kind of a person other than a rancher for he loved working with horses and stock. He was like John in this respect, who would not do any other kind of work if he could help himself. Jay, however, did not object to other kinds of work. I never thought N. V. particularly liked to work with horses.

Frank Wemple, however, wanted to be a lawyer, and he planned to study law under a man named Shinn. The older brothers made so much fun of the idea that Frank gave up the plan. All that Frank realized from his youthful dream was the nickname of Shinn.

John, as well as all of his brothers, had a nickname. It seems that John, in his youthful years, talked a great deal of a man named Schroder. John called him Soder (pronounced like soda) so John was nicknamed Soder. N. V. was called Nickie, and Jay was called Jakie.

Joseph C. Wemple probably never had a nickname. Among his friends he was commonly called Joe, and many of them came to him for legal advice. There were no law offices in Milford, and for years there was no public meeting place. If the people wanted to have a dance, they went to someone's home. Milford never had a church, although church meetings were held in the school house and funeral sermons were spoken in the school house. Hymnals were kept in the school house and at recess time the students often gathered around the organ and sang hymns. The courts are so afraid of mixing religions and schools today I am at a complete loss to understand why the little town of Milford didn't blow the USA wide open.

Milford had lodge members of three different orders, but no place to meet. If Joseph C. Wemple ever became

a member of any lodge, I never heard of it. Neither was he a member of a church. One must assume that there were not many church members at Milford or there would have been a church.

There was a blacksmith shop, a butcher shop, a hotel, a saloon, a stable and possibly a room large enough to hold a small dance. James Christie was calling a square dance when a young man by the name of Rastus became confused – Christie never lost a beat and lustily sang out: "Swing that girl behind you Ras!"

Joseph C. Wemple kept sort of a journal of the events that took place around Milford. I can recall reading in one of his articles that a dance took place last night and the "Decious Orchestra" furnished the music. That must have been Grandpa Decious and his oldest son, Walter. Franck Decious, Walter's younger brother, said that the Joseph Decious family was not musical.

Joseph Wemple wrote poetry for a short time. This, I believe was due to a literary club that was organized in early days at Milford.

I don't think that Joseph Wemple was very musical,

but perhaps, Jane, his wife, was much more apt to have been endowed with musical talent, for both of her nephews, John and James Christie, sang very well. Of J. C. Wemple's sons, probably, N. V. and Orlo sang better than the others – Orlo, at one time sang and danced with his wife in a home talent event.

I have been told by one of my older cousins, Laurence, that Joseph C. Wemple was not an atheist, that he believed in God, or an Almighty, but he was not inclined to follow the footsteps of those he thought were steeped in a large tub of their own self-righteousness. I think he was a strong believer in the Golden Rule. While Joseph was undoubtedly not a church member, his wife, Jane, was a member of the Methodist Church.

CHAPTER SIX

I don't know whether I have created the impression that I thought the Wemples were a family without



The Milford Hotel.

The Milford Hotel was built circa 1865 by Fitch and Washburn. It was completely destroyed by fire circa 1893.

faults, but whatever the impression, the members of the family had faults – possibly as many as any other family, but I have refrained from dwelling on them partly because of the old adage which says: "If you can't say something good about a person, don't say anything at all." And partly because I am a Wemple. If anyone comes to start gossip about a certain family, he or she would do better to try to get the main source of gossip from a source other than the family which he or she hopes to malign.

On the other hand, in Shakespeare's Julius Caesar where Mark Anthony eloquently proclaimed:

"The evil that men do lives after them;

The good is oft interred with their bones:

So let it be with Caesar!"

But I can say with perfect honesty that the faults of the members of Joseph C. Wemple's family were faults that were not apt to get anyone in serious trouble. All, except Orlo, were rather hot-headed around stock. They really thought that was the proper attitude. I have heard J. C. Wemple, Sr. spoken of as a hot-headed Dutchman, but then he may not have been as hot-headed as his twelfth grandchild, Claude C. Wemple. I think that Joe Wemple was quieter around stock than any of his sons except Orlo. The older brothers thought that Orlo did not know how to handle young and excitable stock very well when he was breaking them, and he did take far too many chances, but he seemed to get by.

Joseph C. Wemple's sons told a story of their father when he decided to break a yearling mare that he had purchased from a man named Post. He saddled her in the barn and slipped a blind bridle on her. When he saddled her he had tightened the cinch too much, not knowing that the young mare was sort of a cinch-binder, and when he tried to move her, she fell over backward, landing outside the barn.

Joe Wemple pulled the saddle and blind bridle off the young mare and no one ever had any use for her until Jay C. Wemple, who had become the owner of her when Joe Wemple's horses were divided among his sons. When I was eight years old, Jay Wemple caught her out of the field for me to drive dairy cows to and from the pasture, a distance of two miles one way, and sometimes three miles coming home. Contrary to the belief that the mare was worthless, she proved to be a wonderful mare, although someplace along the twenty or more years of her life, she had lost her left eye.

There was another horse in the annals of the Joe Wemple family that is noteworthy of a few lines. She was a small sorrel mare born blind. After birth, the colt could not nurse her mother, or the mother deserted her baby, so Jane Wemple took it upon herself to raise the little blind colt. Laurence told me part of what I know and my father the rest. There is not a great deal to the story, but the significant thing to me is the blind mare

could be driven over a narrow trail up a steep mountain, turned loose just over the divide, and then every year, find her way to her favorite spot on the range. She could also find her way home. I can remember the mare when I was four or five years old when she was probably twenty years old. Some of the men when driving horses out of the mountains, drove the horses at too much speed and the blind mare was crowded over a seven or eight foot water fall. The fall was sheer, but no bones were broken, that is none of her legs and she continued on homeward.

Joe Wemple and his sons, about 1885, became involved in the horse business in a rather big way. They purchased three stallions – one, an old horse, was an imported draft horse from France. The original owners of the stallion, "Intellect", was Fred Kelley. In any event, Intellect was known as the Fred Kelley horse.

I can recall driving a granddaughter of Intellect on a hay wagon around a threshing machine. The mare became excited, threw up her head, and started prancing – she wanted to get away from the machine. There was an aged pioneer standing by, a well known character by most of the people of the valley, known as Doc Smith. He took one look at the mare and exclaimed, "By gunny, that's an old Fred Kelley mare!"

And the other draft horse stallion was of the same breed and the same color, a gray Norman, the breed from which the Percherons were derived. His name was "King" and I believe he was bred and grown to maturity in Long Valley. The third stallion of the buggyhorse type, I think was a brown, and named "Joe," probably after Joe Wemple. This horse also came from Long Valley.

On one occasion, John Wemple led the horse Joe out of the barn to hitch him and another horse to a skid logging truck. These trucks were equipped with two wheel or two slay runners. I don't think the stallion had shown any trace of having a vicious disposition, but he turned on John, with his mouth wide open and his front feet flying, who was lucky to get under the truck uninjured.

I don't know what happened following this incident, but I don't think that John had any more to do with Joe for sometime.

Intellect was a fine stallion. Over a period of a few years the Joe Wemple family produced many fine young horses. Horses had been selling for well over one hundred dollars per head, and as an example of their value – On August 12, 1889, J. C. Wemple had an entry in his ledger as follows:

To one span of mares – \$250.00

One old harness – \$8.00

But by the time that Joe and his sons were well stocked with horses, the Panic of 1893 had arrived. My father told me that there was no money in circulation – one could not raise a dollar any place. People were

forced to barter in order to live.

Horses were increasing with each year's new foals, adding to last year's number – something had to be done – the taxes were coming due.

So when a buyer came along and offered them sixteen dollars per head, they sold a car-load lot at a price, one hundred nine dollars less than Joe Wemple sold them per head four years earlier.

The Wemple family had stories of a mare named Gay, a foal of Intellect, which are rather hard to believe, but all of them told the same stories, so they must be true.

There was a pulling contest at a Lassen County Fair and the Joe Wemple family had entered Gay in the contest. They told of only one other entry – a fine team of farm horses owned by Lawson. The team was pulling on a stoneboat loaded with rocks. Finally the load became too heavy for Lawson's team, so Gay was hooked to the stone boat alone.

I think a word of explanation is necessary to better understand why anyone would have done anything like this. The Lawson team were good, honest farm horses and did their best, but had never learned to pull. The Wemple family always said that logging was one of the best ways to develop a horse's pulling potential. Gay was a logging horse that lowered her body within six inches of the ground when she pulled heavy loads and she was exceptionally strong.

Gay pulled the load of rocks that Lawson's team could not move, which was said to be a ton, and a little later the same load of rocks with as many men as could get on the stoneboat.

During Gay's life, she was driven to Amedee in a six or eight horse team. Gay was one of the wheel horses. The team was driven up near the depot, stopped and the brakes were set on two wagons loaded with 10,000 pounds of grain. The train came in with the usual noise of a train pulling into a depot. Gay became frightened and commenced pulling on the loaded wagons alone. Wheel horses had stay chains from the double-trees that were fastened directly to the wagon, so if one of the wheelers became inclined to try and had the ability to do this, a horse could pull the whole load and this is just what Gay did – she moved the whole load for a short distance.

The only Intellect foal that I can remember was a gray mare that had turned white in her old age. I don't know anything about her breeding except her sire was Intellect. She was very well mannered and gentle. She probably weighed 1400 pounds and was rather loosely built. Joe C. Wemple used to drive her single on a buggy and make a trip to Susanville and back in one day.

King, the other draft stallion, was gray and I have been under the impression that he was smaller and more of a chunk than Intellect. I have been told that

King bit off part of one of Intellect's ears.

J. C. Wemple, Jr. had a span of mares by King that were full sisters. They were gray in color. The older mare, Weasel, was 200 pounds smaller than her younger sister, Flaxie.

Weasel was never broken to work until after she was twelve years old. She ran loose with the stock horses during those years and it was a one man job to keep her from going wherever she wanted to go. The Joe Wemple ranch was fenced with rails in the early pioneer day and the horses soon learned that an old rail fence could be pushed over by just leaning against the fence. Then, they would walk across the tumbled down fence and help themselves to whatever was on the other side – a ripe grain field, a field of hay that was ready to mow, or just a field of green pasture.

Laurence Wemple said horses that had been driven to Last Chance, Plumas County, when the grass became short on the range made a practice of pushing fences over when they came home. Then someone, I suppose a boy, would mount Steamboat and chase the horses to the top of the mountain in a gallop. If Steamboat could accomplish this feat, and all of the Wemples said that he did, he was the only horse that I have known that has done this very difficult task. Most horses have to rest when they travel uphill in a slow walk.

But while Weasel always disdained to a method so crude as shoving a rail fence over, never-the-less she went wherever she wanted to go – she simply jumped over – rail fences, barbed wire, or board fences – nothing stopped her unless it was a fence six or seven feet high. I have seen her jump a board and barbed wire fence where a horse could get his head under the top wire by holding it in a natural position, and the top wire would clear the saddle but catch on the horn. This happened to me once while I was chasing a cow that went through a hole in the fence and my horse, the one-eyed Post mare, dived through after the cow. The top wire was in place and about ready to saw a hole in my belly, when I got my left hand on the four-pronged wire and was able to get under it with only a cut on the palm between the first and middle finger. The scar is still on my hand. There was no horn on the small saddle. It had been broken off when my horse, loose in the barn, jumped into the haymow and caught the horn on a sill.

I have gone through this diatribe of my own experience simply to prove the height of a fence which I realized the reader might doubt.

About four years previous to my experience, when I was five or six years old, the corral had been used as a weaning pen for calves. Weasel and some of the other horses were running in the field just outside the corral. After the calves had been fed a fresh load of hay, Weasel calmly walked up to the fence about where my

horse would later chase a cow through the break and stood on her hind legs until her front legs were over the top wire, then jump into the corral and commence eating the calves' hay. When she jumped she cleared the barbed wire. She didn't have a scratch on her.

In time Weasel became so troublesome that she and a mule which bulled his way through fences were tied together, necks and tails. The tail rope soon came loose, but the neck rope held for two or three months and the eventual result was that Weasel became very well trained to follow. The mule led her everywhere.

When the neck rope on Weasel and the mule broke and she became free again, I don't recall that she caused any more trouble jumping fences.

Possibly, about 1898, Flaxie had been turned out on the Island with other horses and strayed away as far as the Fish Springs Mountains. The Wemple family heard of her whereabouts, so Jay C. Wemple who was the leading cowboy of the family when John was not on the ranch, and John was often working elsewhere, mounted Frank's prize saddle horse, Fred, and went looking for Flaxie. The distance to Fish Spring from Milford, as the crow flies, according to a road map, is about 30 miles. The distance around the road must be at least 35 miles. Jay C., my father, did not tell me

whether he rode the whole distance to Fish Spring and up the mountain to find Flaxie in one day or two days, but he did say that he gave Fred a very difficult and trying ride.

Anyway, the day after Jay drove Flaxie home from Fish Springs Mountains, Orlo hitched Fred and Patsie, a tireless mare, to a buggy and drove them to Susanville and back to Mrs. Raker's place three miles from Milford where Orlo and Erma, his wife, visited Mrs. Raker. Mrs. Raker's first husband had been Fenton Lindsay, Erma's uncle.

Erma and Orlo visited with Mrs. Raker for a short time, then returned to their buggy to find that Fred had dropped dead.

Fred was a well known saddle horse, probably as fine a horse as one could find any place. Someone of the Wemples had acquired Fred from George Raker and I believe he was raised on the Watson Ranch at Richmond, but I do not have any facts available about Fred, I am merely drawing on my memory.

About 1892 and 1893 James M. Doyle, Jr. went to Fort Bidwell, Modoc County, to spend the winter working on a ranch with my mother's brother, Walter. From there he went to Warner Valley, Oregon, to work on a large ranch. Eastern Oregon was noted for the



Pictured L. to R. back row: Annie Steinberger, Cora Doyle, Orlo Wemple, man in hat unknown, Lelia Hostetter, Frank Wemple. Front row: Harry Doyle, Jane Christie, Ed Wemple, Laurance Wemple. Circa 1895.

finest saddle horses in the United States, according to a United States Cavalry officer. This was probably a mild exaggeration, but the horses were good.

At that time a sporting event of running a man against a horse for twenty-five yards, turning around a stake, and then running back to the starting line to finish the race had been a common occurrence. James Doyle had won from every horse that he had run against in Eastern Oregon.

After returning home two or three years later, with the money that he had saved from his wages and the wagers, he bought a half interest in a country store.

A discussion came up about a race between Jim Doyle and the horse, Fred. Frank bet Jim that his horse, Fred, could beat him in such a race. A wager of twenty-five dollars was posted and the race was arranged and run in due time. Fred won the race, the only horse to ever win a twenty-five yard "stake race" from Jimmer.

The horse belonged to Frank and Frank rode him in the race, but some of the other members of the Wemple family thought they might have done a better job of riding Fred, but this is only a matter of conjecture.

About 1900 or 1901 a man whose name I do not recall led a good looking, wind-broken, sorrel stallion named Colonel up to the Wemple stable and tried to sell or trade him to the Joseph Wemple family. I was a small child four or five years old and I remember the trading had barely begun before it ended with the Wemple family owning Colonel. Colonel weighed, I should estimate, 1300 pounds and looked like a coach horse. He was used as a harness horse. I can remember how he wheezed when he pulled a heavy load.

At this time or some time prior, Joseph had deeded all of his property to his sons. The sons, however, were not supposed to receive the deeds until after his death, but all of them acted like they had already received the deeds. Norman Barry, who at one time had taught the Milford School and had boarded and roomed at the Joseph Wemple home, had made out the deeds.

I doubt if Joseph Wemple had even been consulted when the trade was made for Colonel. All of the other stallions, Intellect, King, and Joe had long since gone to their "happy hunting ground".

Before the acquisition of Colonel, the Wemple family had bred their mares to three thoroughbred stallions to supply the ranch with driving and saddle horses. One of the stallions was a horse out of Willow Creek Valley named Keystone, the second was Dick Roberts' Snuff Box, and the third, which came along a little later was Commuter, which was owned by Gus Harwood. There was another stallion which was owned by Thomas Doyle, a Standardbred-Morgan cross from which the Wemple family received several fine horses. The finest buggy team that I ever saw were foals of this stallion and owned by Fred Straack.

Another stallion, a French Draft, was owned by John Spalding of Eagle Lake and Milford. This stallion sired twelve or fifteen foals for the Wemple family. Jay C. Wemple had six or more of them alone. These horses proved to be excellent draft horses.

An incident took place at the Wemple stable shortly after the family acquired Colonel, that is worth repeating. Colonel had been tied in the north end of the stable to keep him from a bay saddle horse named Sam, that had been acquired from Sam Downing. Sam was a ridgling, which is to say a half stallion. Sam was tied in the south end of the stable so the horses would be separated from each other as far as possible. The horses were led to water two or three times each day. While Sam and Colonel had never been allowed to get at each other, they had shown a keen desire to do so.

One evening while leading the two horses to water their paths crossed in a small pen just outside of the stable. From my own observation the two men who were leading the two horses did not try to keep them apart, but I doubt if anyone can imagine the wild commotion that took place ten seconds later when four or five men tried to separate them.

The horses stood on their hind legs and Colonel clamped his jaws on Sam's throat — Sam went down on his side like he had been shot. The mad scramble had taken place in search of a club heavy enough to break Colonel's hold on Sam's throat. Luckily, someone found that club or Sam would have been counted out, never to rise again. As I remember, Sam recovered without any ill effects. Orlo Wemple owned Sam, and years later rode him to Alturas in the company of several other men from Milford on a cattle buying expedition. Thomas Doyle and, I believe, Stanley Tyler, were among the group.

Orlo traded Sam for a mare while in Alturas. No one bought any cattle.

CHAPTER SEVEN

Again, I must turn back on my story of Joe Wemple and his family of boys. His only daughter, Libby, had married Thomas Harris and eventually settled down in Elko, Nevada. Here Thomas Harris became the owner of a hotel in Elko and a ranch in Huntington Valley. John Wemple, during idle times, spent considerable time on Tom Harris' ranch in Huntington Valley with Tom's brother, Dan, according to Laurence, John's son.

On one such occasion that John was with the Harris' was the winter of '89-'90, the roughest winter to be experienced by white men, since the coming of the first pioneer. Dan Harris and John Wemple spent that winter in Huntington Valley. The winter was not only the roughest, it was probably the wettest. There hasn't been a winter since the settlement of the western part

of the United States by white men that so many livestock were lost. John Wemple told me that in the spring of 1890 when he started back to Honey Lake Valley from Huntington Valley, that in every valley that he came to it was impossible to ride across the valley because of the stench of the dead cattle. John was forced to ride around the edge of the mountains to avoid the stench.

Since the above account of John Wemple's stay at Tom Harris' ranch and his return trip home, I have received the following communication from T. T. Harris' great-grandson, Dr. T. H. Gallagher; "This area is on the west side of the Ruby Mountains and is called Huntington Valley. I think that Tom Harris had taken a terrible beating during the bad winter of '89 and '90. The ranchers in this area lost most of their cattle because of the snow, cold and lack of feed at that time. My great-grandfather, Arthur Gedney, in Ruby Valley lost 90 percent of his herd that year. I think Tom Harris had his belly full of the cattle business when he put his ranch up for sale. I don't know how soon the ranch was sold, but the family lived in Elko after this until he died in 1922."

Dr. T. H. Gallagher sent me an excerpt of the ranch for sale, advertised in the Elko Independent, July 19, 1891.

RANCH FOR SALE on Pearl Creek, in Huntington Valley, Elko County, Nevada, consisting of over 1500 acres of fenced land. Over 250 tons of hay can be cut. It is also well adapted to raising all kinds of grain. Over 150 tons of grain have been raised in one season on this ranch.

The Water Right belonging to this ranch is unquestioned and plenty of water from Pearl Creek for all purposes at hand, at all seasons of the year. One of the finest outside ranches of the state adjoins this ranch. There is a grand Dwelling House of 7 rooms on the ranch, beside all necessary out buildings, such as stables, wagon shed, etc.

For further particulars call on or address

T. T. Harris, Elko, Elko County, Nevada

During the years 1951 and 1952 I hunted with a group of lumber mill men who had sold lumber manufactured in Susanville to a man named Hunter who lived in Elko. Hunter had a ranch on the west side of the Ruby Mountains, south of Jiggs, which he allowed us to use as headquarters. The year, or winter, of 1951-52 was a very hard winter and the deer herd was greatly depleted.

One year later, I hunted in this same location with only three other men from Susanville. We were fortunate enough for each one of us to get a buck, but there were not many deer in that area.

I have gone through Merrill Fairfield's pioneer history hoping to find more about Mary Harris' early family history, but there is not much of Mary's

available.

Fairfield wrote of a William Harris and family, a John Harris, Mary Harris, who died in 1867 in April or May, who was the first person buried in the Milford Cemetery. He mentioned Tom Harris, the Harris of this story who helped Capt. Jack Byrd start a herd of 1100 head of cattle and 165 horses on a drive to Idaho. He writes of a Harris who filed a claim on land in Honey Lake Valley, and of George Harris, who was in the freighting business. George was killed in an Indian fight in the Tules area of Honey Lake Valley.

Thomas and Daniel Harris, brothers, grew to early manhood in Honey Lake Valley. Dan gave Grandma Wemple a picture which she in turn gave to Libby, my mother. I do not know what became of the picture.

Dan Harris moved to Montana and became a rancher of that state. One of his two sons, Joel, who had a horse ranch, gave up ranching and moved back to Marysville, California. Eventually, he settled in Susanville as a barber. One of his main concerns was the locating of his grandmother, Mary's grave. After a few years he passed away.

Dan Harris had another son, who I heard was engaged in the livestock auction sale business in Montana, but I don't know anything else about the man.

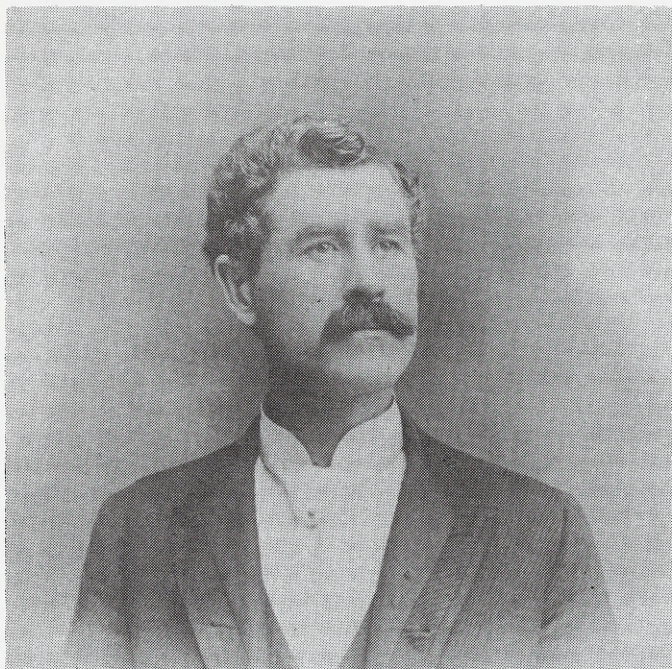
I don't think that the Wemple family experienced any such hardship, but at that time the Wemple family was not heavily involved in the livestock business.

One Honey Laker, George Greeno, lost heavily. Before 1889 his annual branding had been 400 calves, but in 1890 he branded only seventy-five calves, according to Jay C. Wemple, my father.

The summer of 1889 was very dry, there was very little hay cut in the valley. The lake was dry and the wind blew across the valley from the southwest, raising great clouds of dust that enshrouded everything, according to Zebnor Johnson, and according to J. M. Doyle, Jr., the cattle that were driven from the north into Honey Lake Valley could not get a drink of water in the Tules, but had to be driven across the lake bottom to Mill Creek or McDermitt Creek. Feed on the range was scarce and so was water. The cattle had not done well on the range so they were poorly prepared to enter a hard winter. Up to that time winter food had been plentiful and very little hay was fed to anything except the weaner calves and the saddle horses.

I am not very well informed of the early part of the winter, but from all account there was a great deal of flooding with high water everywhere. Then, in February the killer storm came with three feet of snow that drifted in huge drifts, making it impossible to go any place until holes in the fences were cut allowing travel to go around the drifts. That is the way the mail was carried, according to my father.

Unrelated in any way to the hard winter of 1889-1890 is the story of a school teacher, Norman Barry, who boarded and roomed with the Wemple family about that time, the time may have been earlier or later, but the time is of very little consequences. However, what happened is of considerable consequences later in the lives of both the Wemple family and Norman Barry.



J. N. Mercer taught at Milford School in 1895 and 1896. It is unknown where he came from or where he went when he left Milford. When the author was born, J. N. Mercer submitted an article for The Lassen Advocate that said in part "another Wemple has been born who can vote the Democratic ticket."

It is needless to say that Joseph Wemple and Norman Barry became fast friends with mutual respect for each other's integrity and dependability. The outcome of this friendship is that, after Barry had been admitted to the bar, he handled all the legal matters for the Wemple family.

Almost ten years later in 1900, Joseph Wemple purchased the Skinner ranch for \$9,000.00 dollars for his four younger sons. John, the oldest son, had previously received favors equal to the gifts of the younger men. Totaled with this gift of the Skinner ranch was the Joseph Wemple ranch. Each ranch was composed of 500 acres making a total of 1000 acres.

The sons of Joseph Wemple were given possession of the land and buildings to operate as their own. Joseph's house and barn were deeded to John. N. V., Frank, and Orlo used the barn, Joseph Wemple lived in his house until after 1911.

The possession of this property did not include deeds

which had been duly prepared by Norman Barry and left to his safe keeping for twenty one years when Joseph Wemple died, March 28, 1921 on his wedding anniversary which had taken place sixty six years earlier.

We will now move back about thirty years with another horse story which is on the lighter side. It happened, as I have been told by different members of the family, that a preacher came along the road with a single horse hitched to a buggy late in the day and wanted to spend the night with my grand parents, Irvin and Mary Decious.

He must have been dissatisfied with his horse, for he traded him to Irvin Decious, who in turn traded him to Jay C. Wemple. This must have happened in 1892 or 1893 for I do not believe that Jay and Libby were married at that time. The wedding took place February 17, 1894.

Evidently the horse showed signs of having been ridden for he was used as a saddle horse after Jay Wemple took possession of him and called him "The Preacher".

Jay was soon to learn that the horse could run fast, so several matched races were held. The Preacher was not an extremely fast starter, but after fifty yards, he simply ran away from every horse that had raced against him.

The Doyle family had a race horse in which they had a great deal of confidence, so a race was arranged between the horses. At this time Norman Barry was teaching school at Milford, and he too, was quite a race horse enthusiast, so he trained The Preacher. This race ended like all of the other races that The Preacher had run. After fifty yards my father said, there was no race at all.

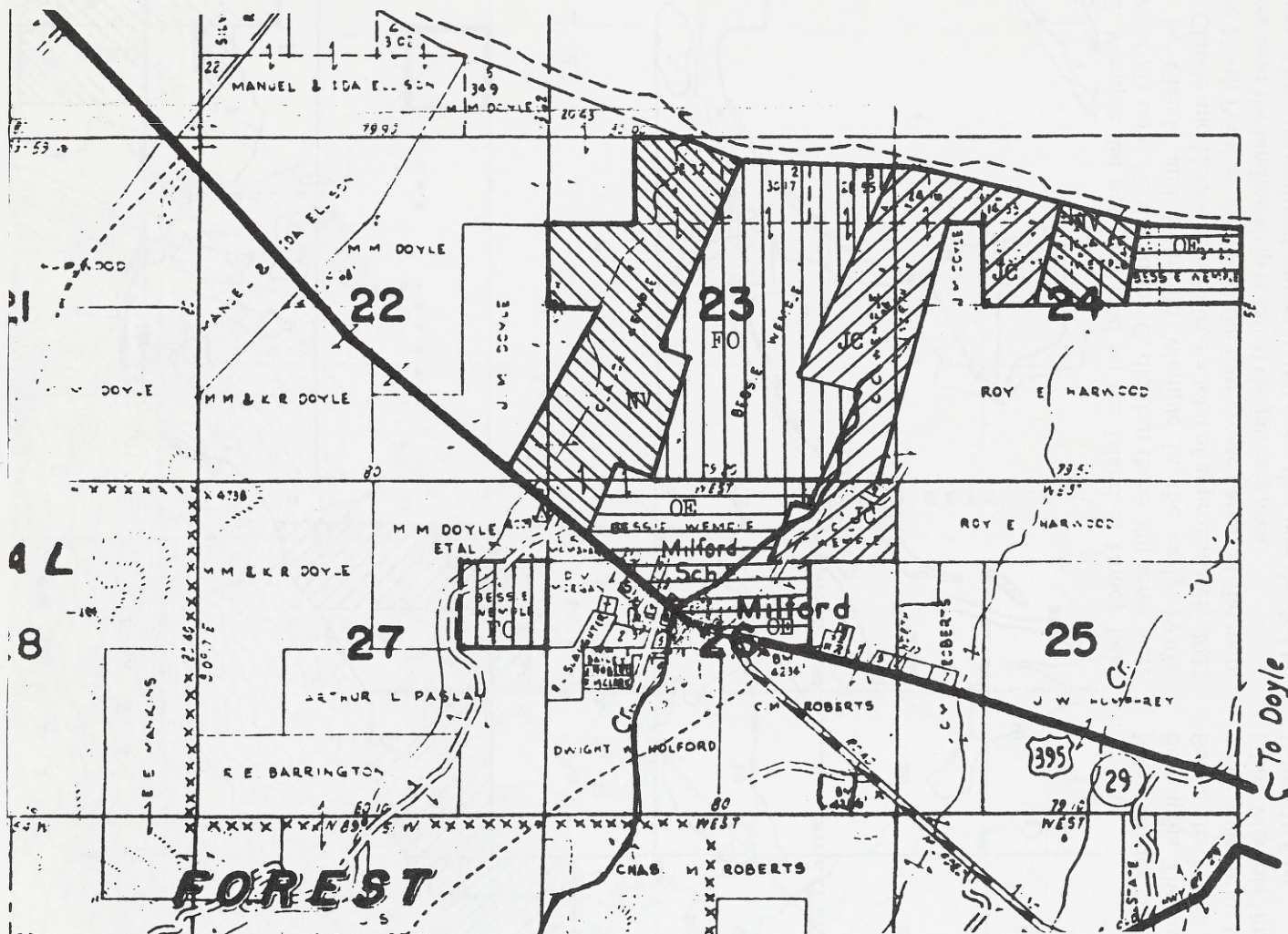
From this point or possibly a little later, John Wemple said, the whereabouts of The Preacher became an unsolved mystery. He was no where to be found. Their interest in The Preacher had so dominated the minds of the Wemple family that the jobs necessary to successful farming were left undone, so Joseph Wemple, in his own good time and own good way, disposed of The Preacher.

The minds of people change as they grow older and what appears to be an unmixed batch of foolishness in old age is a deadly serious business in youth.

Which brings me to a story, though brief that spanned a period of three generations: My mother-in-law gave my wife and me a piano that had been in the Winchester family for a number of years. I am sure that this happened in 1917. I drove a team of horses hitched to a farm wagon to Susanville to haul the piano home, arriving about noon. There was enough help to load the piano at the Winchester home, so I lost no time, but started immediately on my return trip to Milford.

This map depicts the original Wemple Ranch layout, and ownership at the mid 1950s. The original Wemple Brother ownership is shown by the addition of the appropriate Brother initial; that is either N. V., J. C., F. O., or O. E.

The 40 acre parcel in sec. 27 was mountain range land. The four brothers began operating the ranches separately in 1903. Claude Wemple and Sons eventually acquired the original Wemple property.

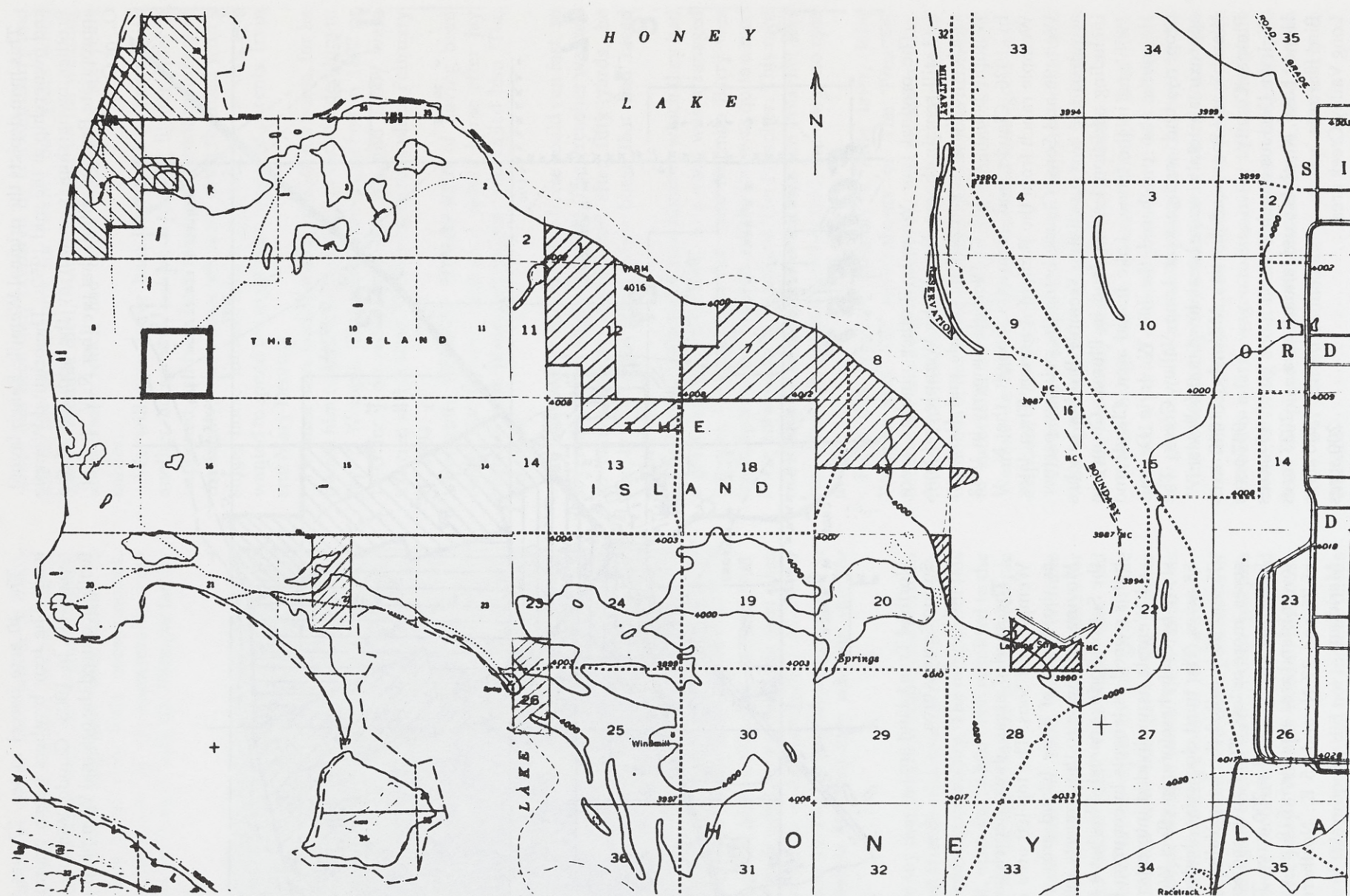


The original four Wemple Brother ranches, were, and still remain the nucleus of the Wemple and Son's ranch and farm organization. Claude and Henrietta Wemple bought the Jay C. Wemple property in 1932. In 1936 Claude and Henrietta bought the N. V. Wemple ranch from the Bank of America. Then, later, Wemple and Sons, Claude being the primary partner, acquired the two remaining Wemple Brother ranches including additional range land in Plumas County in 1956 and in the Honey Lake Island area. Claude and Henrietta also purchased the old W. Irvin Decious property, and acreage near Long Valley Creek. The approximate total acreage breakdown is as follows:

Wemple and Sons headquarters, Milford . . .	1040 acres
Plumas County	947 acres
W. Irvin Decious Ranch	154 acres
Honey Lake, North Is., and January area . . .	2023 acres
Bird Flat area.	200 acres
Long Valley Creek area.	200 acres

North of True Island area	160 acres
Sutton Springs area	58 acres
Grand Total.	4782 acres

The shaded areas above depict land ownership by Wemple and Sons. The top left area in Sec. 22 known as the North of True Island area, and is 160 acres. Moving clockwise to the property in Sec. 23 and 26 is the Sutton Springs parcel. This has a total of 172 acres, but is owned as tenants in common by Ellison, Doyle and Wemple as undivided interests, with a one-third share by each therefore, in effect Wemple owns about 58 acres. The third clockwise shaded property in Sec. 35 and 36 is called the Long Valley Creek parcel, 200 acres, more or less. The fourth and Southmost parcel is known as Bird Flat and is 200 acres. Therefore the total lower island area acreage is 618, all within the confines of 26 and 27 N. and 15 E., Northern Calif. Base and Meridian.



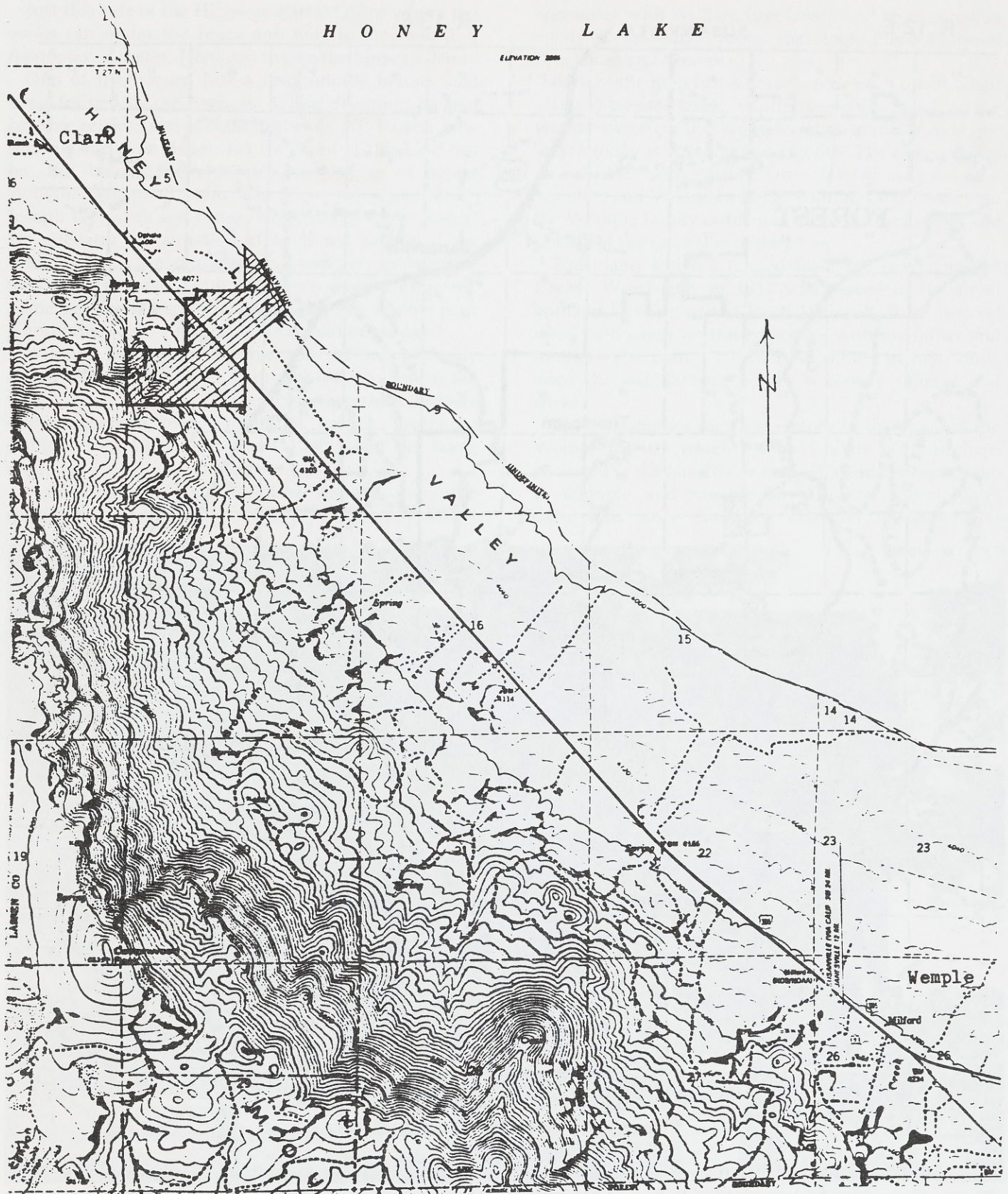
Joseph C. Wemple did not own land on the Island of Honey Lake Valley. Two of his sons, N. V. and Jay C. did, but these 320 acres were purchased by Claude and Henrietta Wemple in the early 1930's. Eventually Claude and Henrietta acquired a total of approximately 2023 acres on the North Point as shown by the four crossed areas of the map. The east area near the landing strip is called the January area.

A fifth area, a heavily outlined square is 160 acres that was deeded by

Judge Gladys S. Burroughs through Claude Wemple to Olga Wemple Burroughs. The late Judge Burroughs was Olga's mother-in-law. Spencer Burroughs, Olga's husband, was the California State Water Attorney for many years prior to his death. Olga is the second daughter of Jay C. and Libby Wemple. Property shown above is in Township 27 North, Range 15 and 16 East.

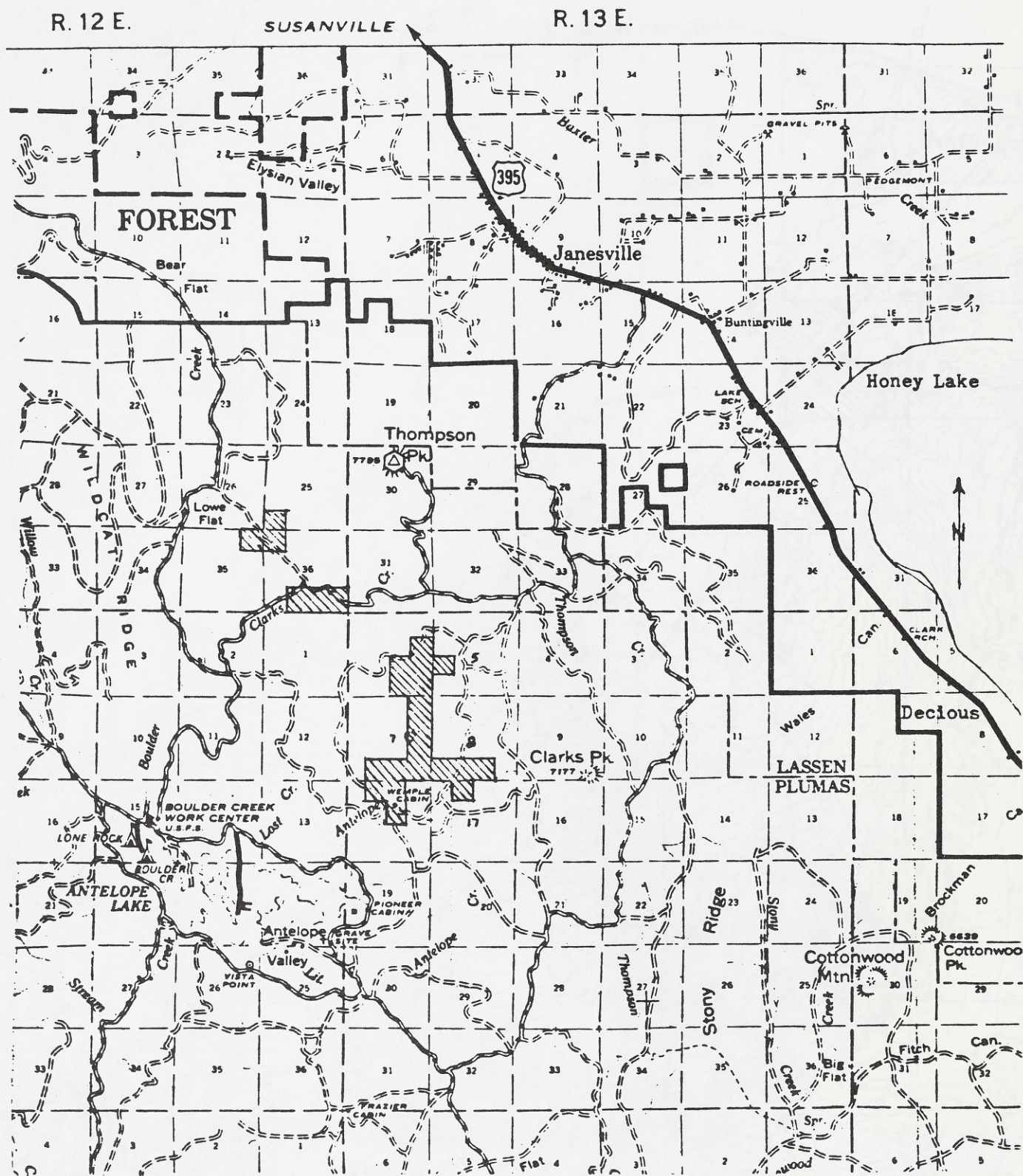
H O N E Y L A K E

ELEVATION 2000



The old Walter I. Decious Ranch, seen cross hatched on the map above, was purchased from the Decious heirs in the Mid 1930's by Claude and Henrietta Wemple. Walter I. Decious was maternal grandparent

to Claude, Libby Decious Wemple being Claude's mother. Property is in part of section 5 and 8, Township 27 North, Range 14 East and Comprises approximately 154 acres.



Joseph C. Wemple owned 440 acres of range land in Plumas Co., which he later deeded to four of his sons. These acres were later purchased by Claude and Henrietta Wemple. In addition more Plumas Co. acreage was acquired later by them and their sons. The three shaded locations above total about 1000 acres,

but Mrs. Bailey owned a small part, so the Wemple total is approximately 947 acres, 240 acres are in Sections 25, 35, and 36, T.S. 28N., R.12E., the Lowe Rd. area. The balance is in T.S. 27N., R. 13E., mostly north of the old Wemple cabin, "Camp Lonesome".

Just this side of the Highway Patrol Office where the water ran under the fence and next to the road in a fresh pool of water, I decided to give the horses a drink.

One of the horses, just a few months before, had been trained to the harness. While drinking, he had become restless and rubbed his bridle off. I knew how serious, and even disastrous, an event of this kind can be. But before I could take any course of action William Brockman, who was about my grandfather, Joseph Wemple's age, came along in a one-horse buggy. He sized up the situation at once and soon had the bridle back on the young horse. I was very grateful for the help and thanked him. He then wanted to know my name, so when I told him he said: "Oh yes, I know your grandfather well – he was quite a sport in his day."

William Brockman and his son, Willis, probably raised more draft horses than any other ranch in the valley. N. V. and Jay C. Wemple were share holders with Brockman in an imported French Percheron stallion from 1905 until about 1910 when the horse died.

I drove home to Milford then without any more mishaps. Some time later, I told Jay C. Wemple of my

encounter with William Brockman, and he recalled an event in his early youth that took place between Brockman and Wemple.

Both of the men had a horse which each one thought was a good race horse, so after some discussion a race was arranged on the Wemple ranch across a meadow which today is anything but smooth. The race was run on schedule with neither horse falling, which was a wonder, and Wemple's horse winning. I am sure that the Wemple family didn't win all of the races, they did not tell of the races which they lost.

The piano which I hauled from the new home of Fannie Winchester in 1917 was placed in the small home of Henrietta and Claude Wemple where it stood until 1936 when we traded houses with my father and mother. The piano, which now stands in my home, once the old Skinner home, is mostly unused and silent.

There is another race horse story in the annal of the Wemple family which I should relate. This perhaps occurred in the late 70's or early 80's and concerns John B. Wemple, and possible David Raker, one of John's pals. This story entails a financial investment of



SKINNER HOME

Originally built in 1884 by L. P. Whiting for his sister and brother in-law, Doc Skinner. Libby Decious Wemple, mother of the author, stated she remembered the house when it was under construction. The author's grandson, Scott Hunt, is also pictured.

considerable money but I am not certain that either one of the other two men connected were in any way involved with the financial end of the project. The third man, who has not been mentioned, was Charles Roberts, a relative of the Charlie that we knew.

I am puzzled by the fact that Joseph Wemple approved of such a plan, but he must have, or it never would have taken place. Possibly the whole thing was beyond his control, which often happens in a father-son relationship.

The plan in simple words was to get a band of horses together, drive them to Fort Collins, Colorado, sell them and make a big profit. The expense account was to have been partly taken care of by the winnings of a race horse, a very good one, which I believe came from the horse farm of Richmond, Lassen County.

The distance from Milford to Fort Collins must be 1000 miles which would require at least forty days to make the trip. The quality of the race horse was pretty well camouflaged by the fact that he was used as a pack horse. Whenever possible the race horse was matched against another horse. According to John, the horse never lost a race.

As I have previously stated three men made the trip to Fort Collins. Charles Roberts was the jockey who rode John's race horse. John said it was impossible to get his horse to start unless he had the best of the start, and he could run a quarter mile in less than 23 seconds.

The reason that the band of horses were driven to Fort Collins was because, at that time, Tom Harris and his wife, Libby, lived there.

I have never heard how John Wemple, Dave Raker, and Charlie Roberts came out financially, but in a case of this nature no news, probably is terrible news.

The three men came back to Honey Lake Valley, for both John and Dave were living here at the time of their deaths. Charlie Roberts, in the early days of Amedee owned a saloon.

CHAPTER EIGHT

You readers may have wondered why John came out so poorly when Joseph Wemple divided the ranch property among his four younger sons, leaving John only the house and barn. In the first place the four younger men had to buy half of the property, the Skinner ranch. The only gift was the Wemple share of the property which included Joseph's ranch of 500 acres at Milford and 280 acres of range land in Plumas County. Jay C. Wemple paid for his share of the Skinner ranch, which amounted to 2,250 dollars, before 1909, or twelve years before any of them received a deed to any of that property. Three of the brothers paid for their share about that time, but I

think F. O. paid some time later.

From all information that I have received from the Wemple family about this financial escapade of John Wemple to Fort Collins, it was only one of more than one that took place in John's life which bounced off the walls of loss and disappointment in Joseph Wemple's face.

So Joe thought that he had spent more money on John than any of his other sons, and probably rightly so.

As we have previously written John liked to work with horses, and he liked to drive a logging team. After the sawmill shut down at Milford there was no sawmill in the community where John had an opportunity to drive a logging team, until E. A. Jordan, who originally came from Maine, built a sawmill on Little Last Chance Creek about fifteen miles south of Milford. It was here that John took up logging again. This job did not furnish winter employment, for the mill was shut down in the winter because of the snow.

John Wemple logged for Jordan until about 1900 when E. A. Jordan sold his sawmill to Doyle and Crowder. After that, as I recall, Doyle and Crowder operated the mill only a short time when they sold it to another company which was out of business within a year.

John then leased F. O. Wemple's ranch with his son Ed.

The Wemple family was involved with horse raising from, perhaps, before 1880 when they owned Intellect, King, and Joe until tractors made draft horses obsolete and the automobile put buggy horses out of use.

During the lives of Intellect, King, and Joe, the Wemple family pastured their horses on Honey Island during breeding season which was in the spring of the year. The lake was high and the water at the Sand Bar was deep enough to swim a horse. Frequent crossing at the Sand Bar necessitated swimming the narrows with men mounted on saddle horses. Usually the crossing was completed without any untoward incident happening, but there were two occasions when the crossings did not go as planned.

On one occasion, when cattle were being driven across the narrows, while a strong south wind was blowing, a bunch of nine head of cattle were split off from the main band and drifted toward the north. The shore line runs north, but the cattle were blown off their course and never reached shore alive. Their bodies were later blown ashore. I never heard who suffered the loss, but the community around Milford used to band together to make cattle drives.

On another occasion, Jay C. Wemple with one or two companions was crossing the lake in a boat or raft and leading a horse behind. The horse became tired of following the water conveyance and started to climb aboard. Whatever the men were riding in or on, was upset and Jay C. was pulled by the horse or thrown by

the conveyance so far away that he didn't try to get back but swam ashore. The other men got back where they were in the first place and finished the crossing.

There was a side effect of running horses on Honey Island. Vast areas around the lake shore have a heavy growth of loco plants growing. The word loco is a Spanish word which means crazy. While crazy might not apply very well to the horses which ate loco weed, never the less, after eating loco weeds for awhile horses lost their minds and became very sluggish and tired acting. If their diet was exclusively loco weeds, horses would die within three months. I saw a band of about twenty horses on the dry lake bed north of True Island die, one after the other, during the fore part of the dry period, 1918 until 1938, in the summer months.

Loco weed resembles a bushy pea plant with one seed, or possibly more, inside a pod, which when ripe and dry rattles in the wind or if an animal brushes his foot against it, hence the name "rattleweed".

Joseph Wemple had locoed horses, but no great number. The seriousness of the condition brought on by the consumption of loco weed was usually proportional to the amount consumed by the horse. I have heard that eating loco weed by a cow could not effect the brain, but in extreme cases would cause death to the cow. I have known cattle to graze where there was loco weed. Once in a while a dead cow would be found, or a sick one, but cattle in a small number die everywhere. Cattle in our area never seemed to be attracted by loco weed, they seemed to avoid it.

The Wemples had a few horses which became locoed and one which was only slightly so, which was shown by seldom revealed symptoms. Horses which are only slightly locoed will, under certain condition, act as if they had completely lost their minds.

The horse which I have in mind was a white mare named Kate. She had a lethargic nature which I thought was natural, but Laurence Wemple, who knew the mare better than I, said she was locoed. She wanted to take her time, and lots of it, when she went straight ahead and it was a weight lifter's job to get her to step backward a few steps. Most thoroughly locoed horses will not back up at all. She had an aversion to any kind of vehicle with shafts attached to it. This was learned years before when Joe Decious, Grandpa Irvin's brother, tried to drive her single in a buggy. Kate ran off and smashed the buggy to pieces. I never found out why Joe Decious happened to be driving Kate; he must have purchased her on trial.

Years later, Irvin Decious milked N. V. and Jay C. Wemple's dairy cows at the lake. N. V.'s boys and I helped with the milking. Irvin had a team of horses on a two-horse wagon which he used to haul the empty cans to the lake and the full cans of milk back to the milk separator. Kate was one of the horses in the team.



Claude and Henrietta Wemple

The author and his wife, Henrietta Winchester Wemple. They were married Aug. 3, 1916 and celebrated their 68th wedding anniversary shortly before her death, Sept. 1, 1984.

We youngsters knew that Kate objected to any one riding past her while hitched to any kind of vehicle, so we galloped past Kate and, lo and behold! here came Kate with buckets and cans flying out of the wagon and Irvin Decious, who had decided that discretion is the better part of valor, flat on his back, pulling with all of his might, his feet braced against the endgate, and headed for a very dense patch of willows.

Kate and her mate were not able to penetrate the willows more than twelve feet. It was sort of a crash landing! With considerable maneuvering, Grandpa Decious was able to get Kate and her mate out of the willows. On this particular occasion she seemed to be more willing to step backward.

The boys and I helped Grandpa Irvin gather up the cans and buckets, so we were soon on our way and finished milking as if nothing had happened — only after the first runaway we didn't gallop past Kate.

One year later, Howard Doyle, who was milking cows for N. V. Wemple while N. V. was occupied with

his assessor's job in Susanville decided to drive Kate single on a buckboard. Guy, my cousin, was with Howard. He had gotten nearly to the lake where there were several hay men who were working in the hayfield and were just opposite the road. Kate seemed to have perfect control of herself. She seemed to have licked the phobia. I was ahead of Kate and the buckboard about one hundred yards, riding along rather nonchalantly, bareback on a little bay single-footing horse, when all of Hades seemed to break loose. My little horse shot out from under me and left me standing in the road. Kate had her ears pinned back and seemed to be running straight at me. I ran to one side with a little of Kate's ability to get moving. She ran like a pack of lions were after her trying to get a fresh meal out of her rear end. Howard, who was thrown out or fell out of the buckboard, got up and started running after Kate and yelling! "Jump out Guy! Jump Out Guy!" But Guy was not about to jump out. His motto must have been "Don't give up the ship!"

Some one in the hayfield gathered in Kate. I think that she was still fastened to the buckboard when she stopped and Guy had a hardwood splinter driven into a shin bone or near it. The front end of the buckboard was pretty well demolished. I am not sure how we got everything put together well enough to do the milking. One thing is certain – what Kate had scattered had to be gathered from the hayfield and the mode of travel had to be completely revamped. Guy had to be taken home, but he wasn't taken to the doctor. Part of the splinter was pulled out, but a piece was left in his leg, he limped around most of the summer before the wound finally healed.

There were other locoed horses on the place but I do not recall all of them. One was a black mare called, Peerless. She was never used for any purpose other than raising colts. When one rode a saddle horse near her she would turn her rear end toward the rider and start kicking at him.

A man named Chauncy Smith, who lived on the Point of Honey Island, had a pair of well matched Clydesdales and a good looking roan draft horse – all were so sluggish that one had to sight over a post to see them move, to use a figure of speech. If anyone wanted to drive them any place he had better double or triple the time ordinarily needed to cover the distance, and there was no need to punish them. They were almost impervious to pain.

George Harwood had a young horse, perhaps two or three years old that had strayed onto the lake bed or out on Honey Island. While the horse ran in this area, he was exposed to a growth of loco weed and became locoed, probably without Harwood's knowledge. In any event, he sent some one after the horse which proved very difficult to drive. The young horse did not want to be driven toward the Harwood ranch. After

chasing the horse an interminable time with no results, the young horse became completely exhausted and fell over on his side, but he continued the running motion until he died.

CHAPTER NINE

My stories inevitably carry me through a period of ten or fifteen years. I had reached the year 1907 with my story of Kate when I was supposed to be in the late 1890's.

The sons of Joseph Wemple, after their father had semi-retired, probably thought that their father had done well, but if only we can get our hands on the reins, we will really go to town. My father, Jay C. Wemple, later told me what Ed Wessell told them. Ed was the man whom Grandpa Joe had borrowed money from when he commenced to acquire land: "Young men, by the time you are thirty-five or forty you will be worth something."

But they were ambitious and willing to take a chance. They bought a threshing machine about 1897 or a year or two later. I am not sure when they purchased it, but I have heard Sam Johnson talk about what a fine crew that they had, how quickly they could move from one job to another and set up. Sam was the separator tender. All of the Wemple men worked at threshing except Joseph C. Wemple.

I do not know many of the particulars of the threshing machine, except the Wemple family had it under shelter in a long shed where Jim Rodriques' house now stands. Jim's house was built for a creamery and used for that purpose for a year or two. That must have been during the year 1899 and 1900 that the threshing machine was sheltered in the long shed.

In August of 1900, a few days after Lyle Wemple was born (August 4, 1900) possibly about the 7th or 8th of August, and early in the season, it may have been the second or third job, for grain doesn't ripen earlier than that, the threshing machine burned to the ground.

The location of the fire was on the John Spalding ranch. Later the ranch belonged to the Harwood family, and still later, Bobby Joe Pearson, but now Leroy Cramer. The fire was about one mile northeast of my house.

Sam Johnson said the separator was lost because N. V. Wemple was driving a kicking horse named Tim. I believe that was the horse's name. The horse didn't like N. V. and kicked him and knocked him back, ruining any chance to save the separator.

About the ownership of the threshing machine, I am uncertain, but at that time only the three older sons owned their homes, so the machinery may have belonged to the four younger sons or it may have belonged to Joseph Wemple. I don't know whether the



Threshing machine owned by Wemple Brothers in Milford. Machine was destroyed by fire in 1900.

machinery was insured or not.

Aunt Pearl Wemple furnished the date of the fire, for she said that she was still in bed after the birth of Lyle, perhaps two or three days, when Uncle N came home and told her of the fire.

I have previously stated that Joseph C. Wemple was elected assessor of Lassen County in 1869 and he served until 1875. In 1888 he was elected supervisor of the third District of Lassen County and served until 1898.

In his campaign for election in his last term of office, a neighbor, James McDermott, ran against him. Each man, my father, Jay C. Wemple, told me felt confident that he would win, so a sum of twenty dollars was wagered on the outcome of the election. Wemple won, so I asked my father how the next election came out, that was in 1898. He ignored my question completely so I made no further attempt to get an answer.

We were out riding at the time, so when we reached home, I asked Mother, and she told me that Grandfather was defeated. She said further that he was badly hurt and so must have been the other Wemples. He was 67 at that time with his birthday anniversary only a little over a month away.

The man who defeated him was John Fisher, who at that time owned the Cowboy Joe Place. John Fisher, with his new job, made enough money to buy the Joe Decious place.

Sometime later, I bought the subject up with Roy Harwood, who was six yers my senior and remembered the details of the election.

Grandpa Joseph had commenced to build a road into Plumas County but it was not in the location where most of the voters thought it ought to be. The road was about half finished when Wemple went out of office.

He also had proposed the building of turnpike roads and this idea didn't take well with some of the voters, although the roads would have been better for year-round travel and much better during the winter months.

It was argued that Wemple's road would have been a longer road for most people who wished to drive over the mountain into Plumas County. But while the present road is a mile and a half closer for the people in the Bird Flat area it is that much farther for the people north of Milford. The present road is two miles longer from the foot of the mountain to the top than Wemple's road would have been. It, at first, was much steeper. I don't think that anything was gained by abandoning Wemple's road.

This was the only political defeat that the Wemple family has experienced, although none of his grandsons by the name of Wemple has ever run for a paying job.

Joseph's grandson by the name of Joe Harris, Elko County, Nevada, was sheriff until he was permently

injured.

CHAPTER TEN

About 1902 Joseph Wemple became jealous of his wife, Jane, who had commenced to develop a crippling case of rheumatism. Because of her infirmity and Joseph's jealousy, Jane decided that she could no longer live with her husband, so during the winter of 1902-1903 she went to Elko, Nevada, to live with her daughter and son-in-law.

This arrangement was not entirely satisfactory to Jane because her arthritis continued to grow worse and the winters are colder. She was among strangers with the exception of her daughter's family and she hadn't been with her daughter, except for short visits, since 1875.

So she came back to Milford the next spring and lived with her son's families. Immediately after her return she lived for the greater part of the winter of 1903 and 1904 with the Jay C. Wemple family, but she moved in with another family before Marjel was born.

She was badly crippled and had to be carried if she went out of the house. She had to be lifted into Jay's carriage. As I recall she lived with different members of her family, moving from time to time. She must have spent more time with her son, Frank and his wife Bessie, for all of her pictures were left in their house when Frank and Bessie moved to Spoonsville. I am not sure that Jane Wemple spent very much time in Spoonsville where Frank Wemple had become the junior partner of E. C. Brown in general merchandising and the creamery business.

Frank Wemple was in this business only a short time, not more than three years, when the store burned and the business dissolved, with Frank moving to Johnstonville.

While Jane was living at Milford, on one particular occasion, she and Grandpa Joe met at Uncle N and Aunt Pearl's house. Joe had asked Jane to live with him again, but she had refused, so he sat silently in his chair with tears running down his face. This was the first time that I saw him weep, but he was to weep again but for a different cause.

Joseph's sons were inclined to blame him for whatever caused the break between him and Jane, but not knowing, I am going to remain silent. If one or both of them could have been a little more forgiving their marriage might have had a happier ending.

When the Wemple grandchildren were small, we used to call on Grandpa and Grandma. Grandma had asthma and used to treat herself by burning dry mullein leaves in a saucer and inhaling the smoke. She spent a good deal of her time either knitting or cooking. At Christmas time, she used to knit each of her small

grandchildren a pair of mittens.

She made pies quite often and when her grandchildren visited she usually had pie crust with sugar sprinkled on the crust for them to eat or tarts.

She made delicious pies of blackberries. I can recall that she had invited Mother and Father to her house for dinner. I don't think that my parents had more than three children then. Grandma served us blackberry pie, the first that I had ever eaten and I can remember how delicious it was. The table was set in the southwest corner of the kitchen. The floor sloped gently toward the west.

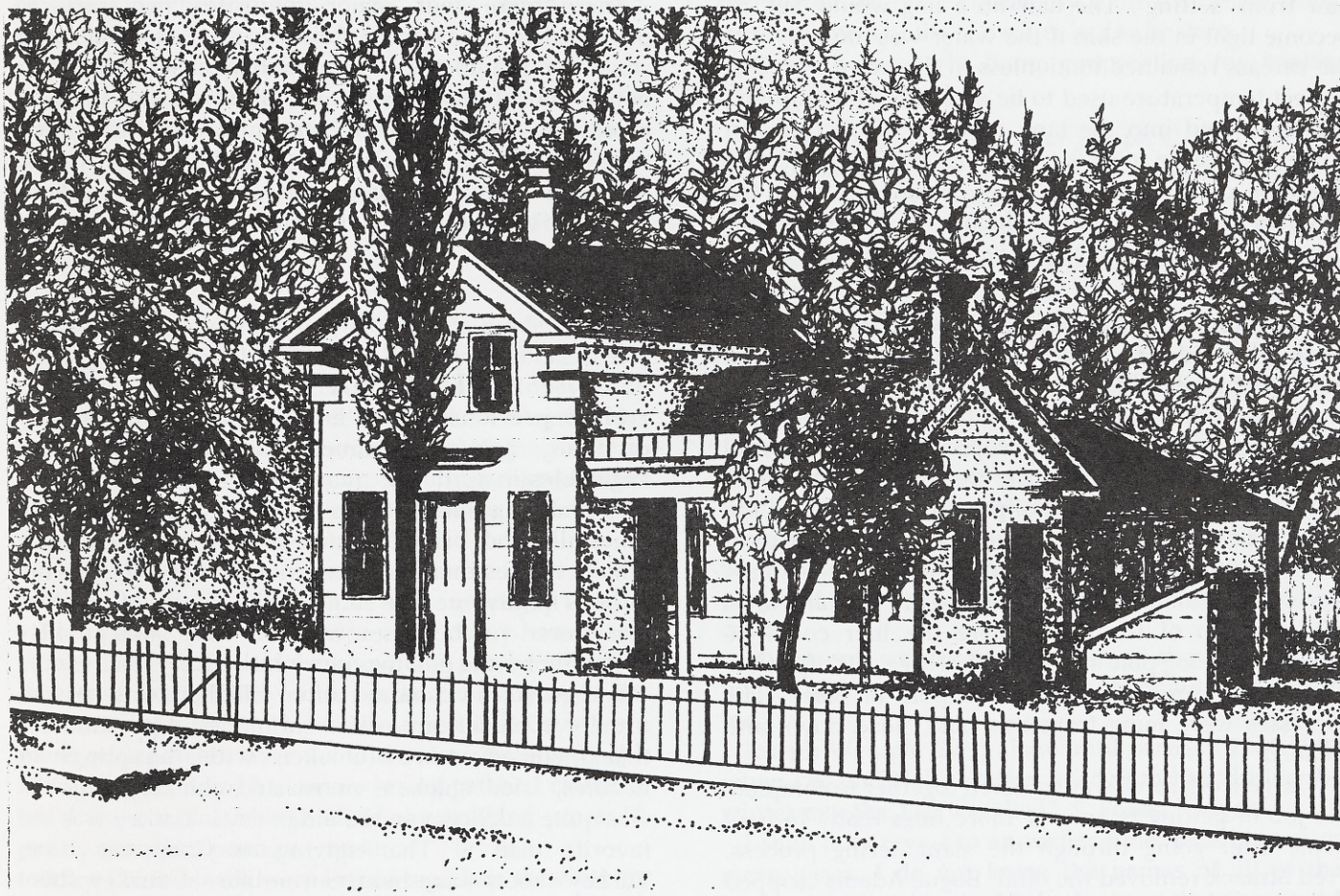
The reason that Jane Wemple's kitchen sloped toward the west was because it was added to the house some years after the main house was built. A basement had been dug under the kitchen and the foundation on the western end of the kitchen had not held up. Whatever remedial action taken was not sufficient to level the floor.

There was a combination store room and a milk room just north of the kitchen door. A back porch and a board walk leading to a gate in a picket fence that surrounded the house led to southeast. Another gate

located in the corner of the fence led to the north east, while still a third gate led north to a stock water trough which was supplied with water from an open tank on the back porch. The tank on the back porch was used for domestic use, but the overflow was used for stock water.

There was a large lilac bush below the tank on the walk which was watered by waste water from the tank. The large lilac seemed to be a haven for monarch butterflies. There was a large weeping willow tree near the lilac bush and another farther out near the gate on the board walk. Near the picket fence, the yard was lined with towering popular trees on the east and north. There was a shade tree near the stock water trough. Flowers in purple clusters grew in the yard. There was no lawn in the Wemple yard, lawns were really not in vogue at Milford in 1900, although the McDermott yard probably had one which was watered by flooding. Grass grew in several yards, but they could hardly be called lawns.

Directly south of the Wemple house was the Dakin house which at first was a twin to the Wemple house



J. C. WEMPLE HOME

Built by J. C. Wemple in 1864. The author remembers the demise of this old home with J. C. Wemple sitting by watching with tears in his eyes.

until the kitchen was added. There was a small barn northwest of this house and a well.

Joseph Wemple got his water from a spring south of his house, about one hundred and twenty-five yards through a concrete pipe in Fairchilds' field.

This pipe may have been laid in 1900, for N. V. Wemple laid one at that time, or to be specific, Ralph Weir was hired to do the job, or contracted, and had just completed the full length, when Fred who was two years old, found his way into the ditch and walked one hundred or more yards up the pipe line, making deep foot prints as far as he walked. That part of the concrete pipe was ruined and had to be rebuilt. For twenty-five or thirty years pieces of this pipe with baby foot prints were lying around, a sad reminder of a disappointed father and concrete contractor.

Northwest of Wemple's house was a hot water vat where slaughtered hogs were dumped into hot water to loosen the hair on the hogs, so that all of the hair could be removed, leaving the carcass clean and white. One hog was put into the vat, at a time, with a man pulling on a large double rope around the carcass, so that the carcass could be kept in constant motion to prevent the hair from "setting". The hair on a hog would "set" or become tight in the skin if the water was too hot, or if the carcass remained motionless in the hot water. The correct temperature used to be ascertained by dipping the bare hand into the tank of water three times in quick succession without burning the hand. If this could be done, the water was considered right for "scalding" or the removing of the hair. A liberal amount of ashes was added to the hot water to supplement the hair loosening effect.

The bottom and ends of the tank was iron sheet metal three feet wide, the sides wooden planks, thirty or thirty-six inches wide and two inches thick. The vat or tank was about five and one half feet long. The tank was placed over a trench and supported by a rock wall on both sides. One end of the trench where the tank rested was open in order to slip in firewood to heat the water. The other end was closed in and a short piece of metal pipe placed next to the tank to act as a stove pipe. A makeshift table was placed next to the tank and level with the top of the tank where the hair could be removed. A long pole supported by three sets of double posts with cross pieces held the pole in place. The carcasses were hung from this pole, head down and cleaned.

A large work force was gathered together to complete the job of getting twenty or more hogs ready to haul home after going through the slaughtering process. Fred Straack removed the offal; Bogue Adams stripped the fat off the intestines. Another makeshift table was put together for this. When the hogs were gutted every thing was stripped out except the kidneys, including the tongues. Joe Wemple was very fond of pickled

tongues and pickled feet. Head cheese was quite a delicacy, also.

Joe Wemple did not keep much of the meat for his own use after 1900 when the last of his sons married. Most of the carcasses went to the three older sons, John, N. V. and Jay. Frank and Orlo probably used a lesser amount. The hams, shoulders and bacon, after being salted and smoked were hung up in an insulated store house.

This supply of pork was by far the major part of the meat that the family would use for the next twelve months. Hog slaughtering was never undertaken in warm weather; usually the middle or last of December was the time to butcher hogs.

The early pioneers had to supply most of the needs for year long living. At one time they lighted their houses at night with candles, and then came kerosene lights and lanterns. Where candles or kerosene were not available open fireplaces were used for lighting a house at night time. But there were not many fireplaces in the early homes of Milford. I don't think there were more than four. Joseph C. Wemple's home had no fireplace.

There were four major requisites necessary to pioneer life. They were food, shelter, clothing, and stove wood. A doctor was a great help at setting broken bones and attending sickness, although the medical profession had made no great advancement at that time. A vaccine for smallpox had been discovered. Although not all of the people were believers. Midwives took care of the newly born babies.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

I have previously stated how families laid in a supply of flour, potatoes, canned and dried fruit and vegetables in sufficient quantities to last a year. I can recall hauling twenty sacks of wheat to a flour mill in Janesville and bringing back twenty sacks of flour, which was estimated to be enough flour to last my father's family one year. An equal quantity of potatoes was stored in the basement. The flour was in fifty pound sacks, the potatoes one hundred.

For guests on Sundays often chicken was served, usually in one of three different modes of preparation: that included stewed chicken with dumplings or noodles, fried chicken, or roasted chicken. Chicken was quite a delicacy in the olden days. Turkey was the favorite dish at Thanksgiving or Christmas time. Turkey shoots were held, but unlike the turkey shoot of today, live turkeys were used before the turn of the century and afterward for several years.

One of the favorite entrees of the time was oysters. They came in cans and all of the stores were well

stocked with them. If a friend wanted to do another person a favor, he would invite him to an oyster supper, generally in the form of an oyster stew. I never remember of oysters being served any time other than supper time.

N. V. Wemple, at the time that he was elected assessor of Lassen County in 1906, invited the voters and their families to an oyster supper.

Most people after a few years of pioneer life had a warm home, but about forty percent were made of rough board lumber. As time passed people were able to own better built homes, although a room of rough board with only a single wall was often added to a more expensively built home.

Rough board homes had no air space in the wall but they were double boarded and air tight with papered walls. One old building of this construction was papered with newspaper which had very memorable events of post-civil war history. Nothing was done to save it, in fact it was wrecked while the owner was gone. The building was as interesting for perusal as a museum.

I do not recall that anyone ever painted any of these buildings, although some may have been white washed. People used to white wash their barns, sheds, and fences, but very seldom.

I don't know what the early settlers did for clothing but my Grandfather, Irvin Decious, used to sing when he was milking cows for N. V. and Jay C. Wemple: "Leather britches full of stiches, leather britches buttoned on; My wife, she kicked me out of bed because I had my britches on."

Another story concerning clothing is hidden among the pages in Fairfield's Pioneer History. It concerned a man who came from Surprise Valley to Honey Lake Valley. When he arrived in Honey Lake Valley he was so ragged that everyone commenced laughing at him. He said then to the laughing crowd: "Boys, I know what you are laughing at, these are my Sunday clothes, you ought to see my working clothes."

The answer to their merriment went over like a million dollars, they thought he was a great guy then.

For a long time there were not many women in Honey Lake Valley. I don't know who patched the men and boys' pants, if they were patched in early days, but well after the Great Depression men and boys wore pants with patches over the knees. I never saw Joseph Wemple nor any of his sons wearing patched clothing, but I wore them through all of my growing years: "A penny saved is a penny earned."

After the railroads were linked together, the clothing problem was pretty well solved.

There were fewer women and girls in the valley than men and boys as late as 1910. People coming from the eastern states had a difficult time believing this for

farther east the situation was just the opposite, they said.

Nearly all families made their own bed clothing, or bedding. For a mattress a tick would be filled with clean wheat straw or feathers. When feathers were pulled out of chickens during the preparation for a chicken dinner the feathers were dried and saved. Goose or duck feathers were preferred over chicken feathers.

Quilts were mostly hand made but a few were purchased from stores, for they were the kind that drove hoboes crazy trying to find the long end of the quilt. They were mostly square.

Quilts were hand made by sewing gingham cloth together until the desired lengths and width had been achieved for two separate pieces, the top and bottom of the quilt. Then the bottom pieces of gingham was spread on the floor. Strips of cotton batten were rolled onto the sheet of gingham until it was completely covered with cotton strips. Then the top piece of gingham was spread over the cotton. Needles with twine were run through the top sheet, the cotton, and the bottom sheet, then back up through the three and tied. This was done repeatedly until the whole thing was tied into a quilt. The edges had to be done.

So much for early home preparation for health, comfort, and warmth.

For two or three years after Joseph C. Wemple and his wife Jane separated, Joseph lived alone, but during the years 1903 and 1904, he rented rooms to a school teacher and his wife with the understanding that the teacher's wife would cook Joseph's meals. This teacher, Wynans, was my second teacher. I do not recall his given name. His wife was pregnant, and after March 10, 1904, when my sister, Marjel, was born, Wynans and his wife, who was well advanced in pregnancy, moved away.

However, before he and his wife moved, I came down with whooping-cough. I never knew why the teacher and his wife moved, but it may have been because both Wynans and Mrs. Wynans were afraid of an outbreak of whooping-cough and thought his pregnant wife would not be able to cope with a severe case.

My parents were gravely concerned about Marjel but not a single person caught the whooping-cough from me.

Joseph Wemple lived alone until perhaps 1906-1907 when Del and Nellie Pattan lived with him during the winter months. Del was the U. S. Forest Ranger.

I shall now revert to an earlier time, possibly ten or more years. I do not know the names of all of the people who lived in the Milford area at that time, but I know some of them: There were the Van Cleaves, the Colliers, the Glascocks, the Trues, the Squires, two Doyle families, not related, Frank Thomas, and later

the Spalding family, who bought Thomas' place, the Siffords, the McDermotts, the Rices, the Grass family, the Skinners, the Wilburs, the Downings, the Crosbys. Three Raker families, Chris and Toby Marty, the Bronsons, Frank Sutter, Fred Straack, two Decious families, the Bass family, the Jordan family, the Tylers, Wellington Adams, the Wemple families, the Laufman family, the Fairchilds, the Washburns, the Fitches and the Christies.

It was a pioneer custom for the men in a community to all gather at a store or saloon for a friendly get together on Sundays, rainy days, or during slack times. On such occasions when a full crowd had gathered, George Glascock, who usually was a little late, often walked in on the crowd with a cheery "Good morning everyone!" and then he would take a good look at Joe Wemple and say "Howdee Joe". Evidently, his feeling for Joe was one of awe.

This anecdote may explain why! Poor George had been plagued by a troublesome mortgage which he was unable to shake. During one meeting he said to Joe Wemple: "Joe, I had a chance to sell my horses and pay off my mortgage, but I didn't because I would have nothing to fall back on." Joe shouted back at him "Fall back on your ass and get up and try it again."

People came to these meetings as far as ten miles away. I can remember many years later that Jim and Charlie McQueen who drove a fine team of horses on a buckboard from a distance of eleven miles to meet at J. M. Doyle's store. When they were seventy-five yards away they would let out a boisterous "Hello".

This happened nearly every Sunday with the last members arriving about 10:30 A.M. The meeting lasted usually until 1:30 P.M., sometimes later if some of the men became inebriated. The women seldom came, although many of them visited at other homes.



Pictured L. to R. Back Row: Sadie Harwood, Jennie Doyle, Unknown, Unknown, Mamie Doyle, Jessie Laufman. Middle Row: Unknown, Erma Wemple, Grace Raker, Gladys Wemple, Bessie Wemple holding Paul Wemple, Grace Christie holding Murel Christie. Front Row: All Unknown. Picture taken circa 1906.



Most people were unknown to the author. However he did recognize Chris Raker in the extreme left back row sitting between two ladies. He also recognized in the front row, L. to R. Unknown, Gladys Wemple, Unknown man, Bessie Wemple, Paul Wemple, Erma Wemple, Unknown Lady, Frank Wemple behind chair, and Orlo Wemple. Circa 1903.

The pioneer women did not drink liquor and I saw only one who smoked; she smoked a pipe. As late as 1912 women in Honey Lake Valley didn't smoke nor use liquor, but according to Mrs. John T. Long, where I boarded when I went to high school in 1912, the women in San Francisco drank as freely as the men.

Men who used liquor to excess drank in bars or any place but their homes. None of these men that I knew, but one, drank steadily. It was estimated that he drank about one quart of whiskey each day. He was a very dependable worker, out on cold winter days at 6:00 A.M. and willing to work late, but he kept his bottle in the barn, and he had to feed his horses often. The barn is where nearly all of the heavy drinkers kept their whiskey.

Some of the light users of whiskey ordinarily had only one drink each day. My father-in-law, who was a blacksmith, at quitting time walked across the street to a bar, had one jigger of whiskey and walked home.

Of course there were no set patterns as to the use of liquor in the early days and as late as 1915, nor at any

other time. One saying about the early pioneer was: "When the train ran out of whiskey everything stopped." I doubt that.

But of all of this, one thing I am certain: Very few women used liquor or tobacco in Honey Lake Valley before prohibition went on the law books in 1918, and I think all of northern California.

I doubt if Joseph Wemple kept any liquor in his house, for he did not smoke, but he used chewing tobacco. His son Jay C. said that a cut of tobacco would last him one week.

After prohibition was passed, both men and women used what was then called liquor, a rather poor substitute for any kind of liquor. This liquor often caused sickness, and once in a great while death.

Some of the old inebriate drinkers would use commercial alcohol which could be purchased for as little as twenty-five-cents per gallon. Brown sugar was added to the alcohol and a gallon of water to a gallon of alcohol, or fifty-fifty mixture, whatever the quantity. This concoction was not so lethal as some of the other

creations, but never-the-less it was guaranteed to produce a one hundred percent hangover.

The joy of indulging in this kind of celebration was completely ruined when Uncle Sam ordered that all commercial alcohol must have an ingredient present which made it completely unfit for human consumption.

Joseph C. Wemple lived only two years after 1919, when prohibition went into effect, and due to the fact that he did not use liquor, did not carry any money, and practically never left Milford, I doubt that he was greatly concerned about liquor problems.

He, however, was an avid reader of newspapers and to satisfy his desire to keep abreast of current events, he read the San Francisco Examiner. He purchased a large history book of the Japanese-Russian War. He had several history books among his other books.

Joseph C. Wemple, during his latter years, was very active at gardening. He was a strong believer in fertilization with manure. His garden was fertilized heavily every year. It is very difficult to realize that anyone could get the production that Joe Wemple or any of the other gardeners around Milford produced. There was no commercial fertilizer then.

In later years, I leased three or more acres to a neighbor and his production was only about one-third of Joe Wemple's. But if he fertilized at all, it was only lightly. Joe Wemple during his latter years had a garden of less than one acre.

I can recall John Christie walking down into Joe Wemple's garden and helping himself to a half dozen ears of corn, probably in 1902, the year before Doyle and Christie's store and hotel burned, and Wollen's barn, which Doyle and Christie leased, went up in flames also.

John Christie was the post master – following the fire there was no post office in Milford, so N. V. Wemple offered a room in his old rough board house, which was rather spacious, and had been the home of two or three other families before N. V. Wemple purchased it in about 1892.

N. V. hired his brother-in-law, Will Bronson, to build a post office building which was joined to N. V.'s home.

This building was used until 1905 when J. M. Doyle opened up a new store by purchasing John Wemple's house and moving it diagonally across the street and joining it to the Wollen house for a store, post office, bar, and hotel rooms.

Wemple's building was then used as an extra room on his house for he had a large and growing family. In 1906 N. V. Wemple ran for assessor of Lassen County. He was elected by a comfortable majority and made plans to replace his old house with a new one. The post office was then moved or had previously been moved to the southwest of N. V.'s new house and used as a bunk house.

Joseph C. Wemple, as I have previously stated, lived in his old home alone with the exception of the times that the school teacher Wymans and Mrs. Wymans, 1903 and 1904, lived with him. The next married couple was Adelbert (Del) and Nellie Patton in 1906 and 1907. The last couple to live in his house, Clif and Mrs. Smithson, 1910 and 1911, were newly weds from Ohio. In fact, the three couples who took rooms in Joseph C. Wemple's house were all newly weds.

CHAPTER TWELVE

In order to get the complete story of the ventures of the Joseph C. Wemple family it becomes necessary to turn the page of time back to 1901. Everything starts with a dream or an idea, that developes in the minds of someone and more often than not these dreams do not pan out as expected.

The family of boys, eager to get along in the world, and willing to do something about it had tripped their financial toes on a snare, possibly to no fault of their own when they entered the horse business. The real nemesis was no doubt the panic of 1893. Then seven years later their dream of immediate financial success was somewhat obscured when their threshing machine burned, but with the will to succeed and the optimistic spirit of youth, they were still undaunted and ready to try again.

I never heard about the financial outcome of both of these undertakings. It is possible that, if there was a looser it was Joseph C. Wemple.

The next financial undertaking was the purchase of a seventy-five cow dairy. Fifty cows were purchased in Sierra Valley, Plumas County for 50.00 dollars per head from Nichols. This was an excessively high price at that time. Others were purchased from the Lawson family and there were a few head on the ranch at the time that both purchases were made. There were no milking machines at that time, so all of the cows were milked by hand.

The Wemple family used a one legged stool and usually a three and one-half gallon bucket. The cow was approached from the right side and the milker would lean against her right hip in such a way by using his body and right leg to press against the right hind leg of the cow to cause her to move her leg back six or eight inches. The milker then sat down on the stool, brushed the dust and dirt off the cow and with the bucket between his legs commenced to milk. Some cows are quiet and calm, others nervous and fidgety and they had a great deal of trouble standing still. The finger nails were trimmed often to prevent cutting the cows teats. The cow's teats were not the same shape nor size. The front teats were mates, or the same size and shape

and larger than the back teats which were also mates. Some cows had two, three, or four extra teats on the back of their udders. Their teats and udders varied greatly in size and shape.

I suppose the cows often experienced pain when they were milked for they retaliated by kicking the milker over and spilling the milk. These cows often had kicking chains fastened to their legs or were tied with a rope.

If I am not mistaken the Joe Wemple family commenced dairying in 1901. That, perhaps, was one year after Joe Wemple turned his ranch over to his four younger sons to operate according to their best judgement and ability which was about the year 1900.

By this time all of the boys had married. Orlo had married Erma Holland whose mother had married a brother to Fenton Lindsay, one of the cattle ranchers of the Bird Flat area. Erma's home was in San Francisco, but she used to visit Fenton's former wife and her two children, Kathryn and Peter Lindsay. Before the time that Erma visited this family Mrs. Lindsay had married William Raker whose first wife had been John Decious' widow, my great-grandmother.

While great-grandmother was alive, Mother and her brother, Walter, used to spend a great deal of time with the Rakers. William Raker lost an eye, I presume, while married to my great-grandmother. William Clark laughed at William Raker's misfortune, but not long afterward and while William Clark was whip-breaking a horse with a long whip he cut his own eye out. My grandparents, Irvin and Mary Decious, thought that this was a case of retribution. Great-grandmother passed away and William Raker married Mrs. Fenton Lindsay. Mrs. Raker later inherited the William Raker ranch.

This is a rather long story of the different families around Milford to explain the presence of Erma Holland at the Raker home.

Frank was the last to marry and I suppose this took place in 1900.

Both Frank and Orlo, with their wives, moved to the Skinner house about 1901. That is the house where I am now living. Although six Wemple children were born here, Paul, Frank and Bessie's son was the first. None of my children were born here, all were born in Susanville. Neil was the last child born here.

Frank, Orlo and their wives moved to the Skinner house to help with the dairy. About half of the cows were moved down here.

There was a long shed which could be used as a dairy barn. There was also a horse barn which could be used in case of emergency. A storage shed about seventy-five yards southeast of the house was moved to its present location and used as a sort of creamery. A hole was cut in the floor of the building to make a place for a small steam engine which was used to furnish power

for the milk separator and a small churn.

I can recall the spring of 1902, when I was coming six years of age, my father put me on his favorite saddle horse, Steve, and sent me to the Skinner place for a brick of butter. Uncle Frank was working with the milk and cream.

I rode Steve down the lane, the gates were open, and down to the door of the building, when Uncle Frank stepped out to ask me what I wanted and I said a brick of butter. He handed me the butter, so I continued the last half of my ride, butter in one hand and the reins in the other. When I passed Uncle John Wemple's house one of his older boys was standing in the road and shouted at me: "Lope him!" I kicked Steve and he eased into a gentle lope, then after three strides commenced walking again. Only a short distance remained to reach Dad's gate, so I arrived safely with the butter.

The small building that was used for a creamery was entirely inadequate, so a new building was constructed of lumber, and the building was very spacious compared to the first building. It was below the store in Milford about seventy-five feet below the highway. There was a large false front which so many commercial buildings proudly displayed in the early days of our valley. A large engine room with plenty of room to store the fire wood for the engine; a hoist and short track where milk cans full of milk could be lifted into the building, and a stand to hold them so that they could be poured into the milk separator tank without lifting them; a short stairway to the stand, and a large wooden churn on the opposite side of the room which fronted the road. The separator and churn were powered by the steam engine.

There was a smaller room where the butter was packed, cut, wrapped, and stored. I have concluded that the market was good. The creamery was built in the fall of 1903 and the early winter months of 1904. After we, Jay C. Wemple's family, moved to the Skinner house, May 6, 1903, Uncle Frank, Aunt Bessie and Paul moved into the house that Dad had built above the store. About this time, F. O. Wemple took charge of the creamery, the other brothers in various capacities ran the dairy herd and did the milking. Some of the neighboring dairy men brought the cream from their dairys to the Wemples and had the cream processed.

The Wemple Brothers continued with this four-way partnership until 1905 when it became apparent that not all of the brothers were satisfied with the conditions as they had developed.

So the partnership was dissolved, the land and cattle were divided into four equal parts, although the brothers had not received a deed to the land, for it was still in Joseph Crawford Wemple's name.

At this point in the life of Joseph Crawford Wemple, his son, F. O. Wemple, who wanted to make a change

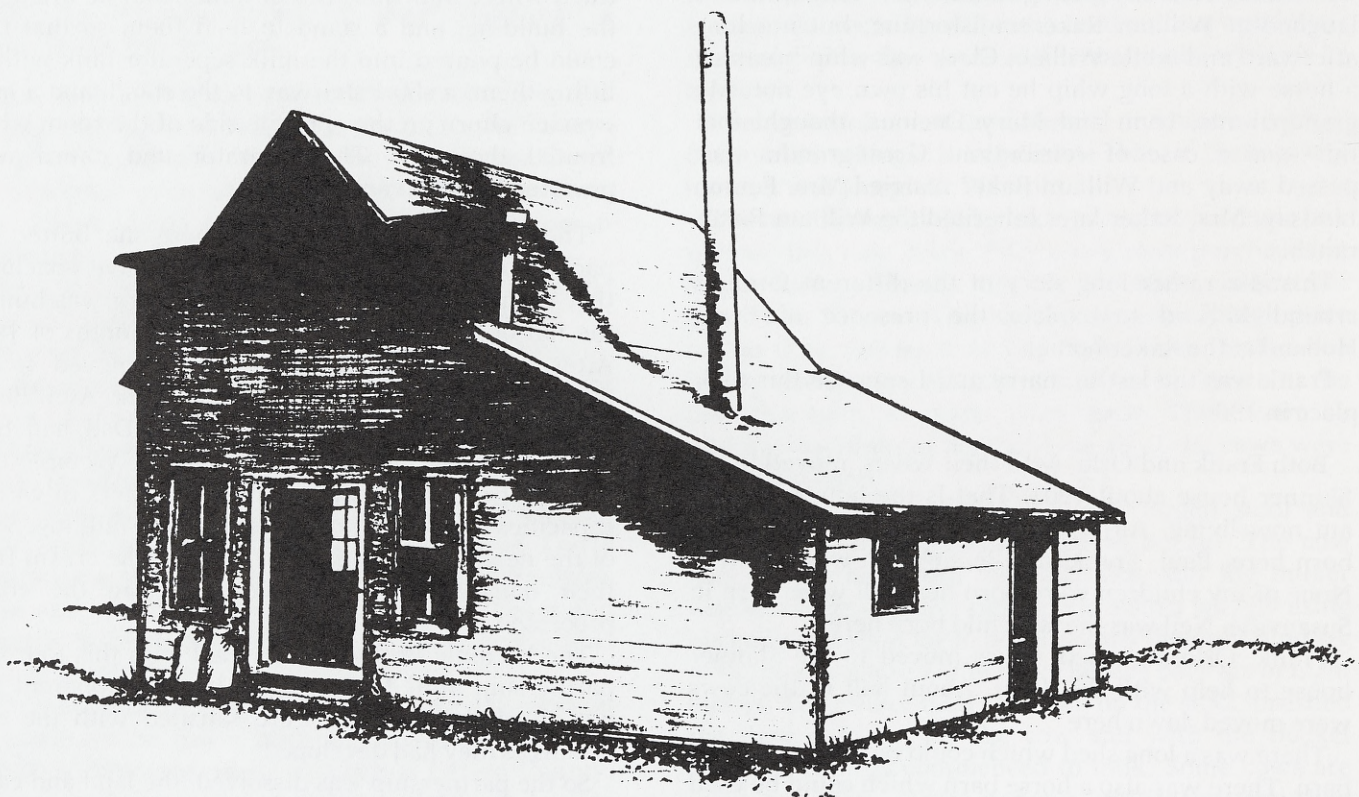
from the rigors of a dairy farmer to a more leisurely form of occupation, mortgaged his share of Joseph C. Wemple's place and his share of the unpaid part of the Skinner place for 5000.00 dollars, moved to Spoonville and bought an interest in E. C. Brown, his brother-in-law's store and creamery. I am sure that Joseph gave his son, Frank, his whole hearted approval to do this and there was no opposition from any of the other brothers, but there was a certain amount of skepticism concerning the advisability of this move by the rest of the family. But this may have been the most important move in F. O. Wemple's life, for he escaped the ravages of the twenty-one dry years and did not have to contend with the full force of the Great Depression when it came, for he was assessor of Lassen County at that time.

N. V. Wemple, who had built a model dairy barn at that time, expected to continue in the dairy business. He had three sons who were old enough to help with the milking; Orville 13, Guy 11, and Fred 8. But by the year 1906 N. V. decided to run for assessor of Lassen County. He was successful in his campaign for the office for a term of four years, ran again and was reelected. There was sort of an unwritten law at that

time that no office holder should run for a third term and most people strictly observed this practice, so N. V. did not run for a third term. Now the conditions are just the opposite, for once a politician gets his foot inside the door it is almost impossible to get that person out of office. I suppose this practice stems from the fact, that at the present time it is very difficult for an employer to fire anyone.

When Frank Wemple vacated his ranch and moved to Spoonville, John Wemple's son, Edmond, took over the operation of Frank's ranch. All of John's family moved into Frank's house. Edmond was not on Frank's ranch more than one or two years. For four or five years the four ranches acted as a unit at haying time. Previously all of the hay had been moved from the field to the stacks or barns by wagons. About 1903 the Wemple family purchased their first buckrake. One year later buckrakes were used exclusively for stacking hay on the Wemple brothers' ranch.

The crew was made up of men to drive four or five mowing teams for about one week and two to four hay rakes. Usually boys drove the rakes. Then after a week of mowing, two men on mowers took over the mowing, and the stacking commenced.



Wemple Brothers Creamery

The creamery was built by four of J. C. Wemple's five sons in 1903. John, the eldest was off on other adventures at this time. It only operated as a creamery for approximately two years when the brothers dissolved the partnership. The creamery was built into a house. Circa 1945 by Will Hallsworth.

For stacking, three buckrakes were used; a net tender and a boy to help him; three stackers; and a derrick driver or a cart driver, who was nearly always a boy.

Haying was a time of expense and the owners were usually in a hurry. The work was hard and the temper sometimes became short. A dairyman was hired to take over the dairy cows, although after the dissolution of the ranch, not later than two years, there were only two brothers with dairies; they were N. V. and Jay C. Wemple. Instead of the Wemple families churning their own butter, the cream was sent to Spoonville to the Brown and Wemple creamery.

Spoonville had been named after the Spoon Brothers who founded the town, a short time before the turn of the century. A junior partner J. I. Christie, had been taken into the business about 1900 or 1901. My parents stopped to visit the Christies when they were returning from a visit with my mother's sister, Effie Brunhouse and her husband, Fred. This was shortly after Christmas. Effie had tuberculosis and died the following April 1902.

The firm went by the name of Spoon Brothers and Christie. In a short time, Christie sold his interest to the Spoon Brothers and they traded their business to E. C. Brown for his ranch in the Tules.

Brown and Wemple sent a two horse wagon to Milford to pick up cream once each week. The buttermilk was returned to the farms scattered along the way as the wagons drove along, and groceries were delivered in payment for the cream. Not a great amount of cash was left over after the grocery bill was paid, so the cash payments were small.

F. O. Wemple's dairy cows were left on his ranch at Milford until 1907 or 1908 when he moved to Johnstonville from Spoonville after the store had burned. Guy Wemple and I drove them through the Byers Pass to Johnstonville to a farmer who had purchased them.

What Orlo did with his dairy herd I do not remember, but they may have been turned out with the stock cattle. About 1907 or 1908 N. V. and Jay C. Wemple brought to an end their dairy activities.

Orlo and Jay, the only brothers who were actively engaged in ranching, commenced to buy steers in the late summer and fed them in a feed lot until they were ready to slaughter.

For two years or longer the brothers, Jay and Orlo, did well feeding cattle. Orlo, after two or more years, was able to show a profit of 10,000 dollars, which he invested in stock in the Bank of Lassen County.

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

The first automobile had chugged its head over the horizon of Lassen County. The advent of the

automobile was surely a time of dramatic change. Horses were deadly afraid of them. When an automobile and a buggy team met on the county road the horses became unmanageable. The only way to quiet the horses was to pull the auto to one side, stop the motor, and drive the horses quietly past the auto. People were equally excited when an automobile came along. Some one would yell "an automobile is coming", and everyone would pour out of the house like it was on fire, and stare in wide eyed consternation as the auto chugged by at a top speed of fifteen miles per hour, something beyond the imagination. They were used to a fast buggy team rushing by at seven or eight miles per hour, or a run away team covering ground at the rate of eighteen to twenty-three miles per hour when everything would be smashed to smithereens.

A few years after the first automobiles emerged into the tranquillity of Honey Lake Valley, N. V., Jay and Orlo purchased automobiles. N. V. purchased a Hupmobile, but Jay and Orlo purchased model T Fords. Jay's was a touring car, but Orlo's was a coupe.

Before any of the Wemple brothers had purchased an automobile and as far back as 1903, both Jane and Joseph Wemple had been living quiet uneventful lives. Neither one was greatly disturbed nor concerned about the events of the dairy, the creamery, the division of the ranch and the departure of Frank and his family to Spoonville, however the campaign of N. V. Wemple in 1906 aroused the Wemple parents from their every day quiet existence to one of suspense and excitement. Never-the-less, Joseph kept his personal feelings pretty well shrouded in other activities, for he went quietly about preparing his own meals, reading the Examiner, and during the garden season often raising a garden in his own garden, and another below the creamery.

With Jane the conditions were different, she was not able to do a great deal of work, but she walked around the house very well for one so badly handicapped by rheumatism. Her interest in N. V.'s campaign was just as keen as any of the other members of the family. She spent nearly all of her remaining years with Frank, Bessie, and Paul. She was to live only a little longer than two years after N. V. took office in January, 1907, before she passed away April 1, 1909. Her last words were "All is glorious." The funeral was held in the Milford school house. In the absence of flowers, her grandsons had gathered evergreen boughs to decorate the school. She was denied the pleasure of riding in an automobile.

I doubt if Joseph varied his routine greatly. He lived in the house that he had built with his own hands. He walked down to Doyle and Christie's, post office and store to watch Rattling Jack Anderson come in with early morning mail and any exciting news that had happened in Susanville or along the way.

Jack was a one-legged man who wore a peg attached

to his knee joint. On cold mornings he would rush up to the wood heater, stamp his remaining foot and also his peg on the floor and exclaim "my feet are about to freeze!"

A wave of religious revivals swept the countryside before the turn of the century and from the accounts of my parents the people really became excited. Jack Anderson attended one of these meetings and decided that he would go before the minister, confess his sins and start a new life. He said in a rather quiet voice: "I have been a sinner for ten years," and after taking a second thought and absorbing some of the excitement of the occasion he shouted "Yes by God twenty!"

Grandpa Wemple used to walk to the store and post office when Doyle and Christie had the store that burned in 1903. Then for a period of two years his son N. V. had the post office and there was no store, so Joseph walked to N's house for the mail. Quite often he would find a rocking chair that suited his fancy, sit far back in the chair and pull both feet up into the chair with his knees under or near his chin. He didn't have a stiff joint in his body.

When the automobiles took the place of the stage

coach as mail and passenger carriers, Joseph Wemple was deeply puzzled about the ability of the machine to start instantaneously. When a person started a steam engine a fire had to be built about two hours earlier in the fire box and steam generated.

On one occasion N. V. took his father for a ride to Susanville in his Hupmobile. After driving around town to see the various sights, N. V. suddenly decided to enter a garage on Main Street where Doyle Motor Co. is now located. Joseph didn't know anything about garages and thought N. V. was running through a house. He reared back in the seat and demanded in a peremptory manner, "Now, where in hell are you going!"

But Joseph in time became accustomed as every one else did. I doubt that he enjoyed tearing around the country in one of the darn things.

CHAPTER FOURTEEN

In the spring or summer of 1903, John Wemple and John Doyle were employed by James M. Doyle Jr. to



Pictured L. to R. Back Row: Florence Grass, Ethel Tyler, Jessie Laufman, Grace Bass, Vera Grass, Roy Harwood, Mr. Wynans, the teacher, Harry Doyle, Jonas Laufman, Howard Doyle, Cecil Bass.

Front Row: Jess Doyle, Guy Wemple, Oroville Wemple, Claude Wemple, Erma Christie standing, Myron Doyle and Earl Wemple.

Picture was taken in the fall of 1903.

haul two wagon loads of merchandise to Tonopah, Nevada. James M. Doyle, who had a plan to start a general merchandise store in Tonopah, made the trip with them. Both John Doyle and John Wemple were unemployed at that time. John Wemple was unemployed because he had run out of logging jobs, and John Doyle because the Doyle and Christie store had burned down. John Doyle had run and operated the bar in the back of the store. The two wagons consisted of two four-horse wagon loads of general merchandise and lumber to the mines of Tonopah, possibly a distance, at that time, of more than 300 miles. That was when the roads all wandered in a round-about way.

The purpose of the adventure, originally, was to build a store in Tonopah and go into the merchantile business. But after encountering the hardship and expense of traveling and hauling freight, second thoughts commenced to emerge which caused Doyle to change his plans, so he commenced to sell his merchandise, lumber and all.

The three Honey Lakers had made camp not far from where George Wingfield established himself.

I am not sure how much time was required to sell all of the merchandise but I would estimate that all three arrived back home at Milford in approximately three months.

The price for anything in Tonopah at that time was high, but so was the cost of hauling merchandise so far. I have been under the impression that both John Wemple and John Doyle drove a four-horse team, but they may have driven a six-horse team because of very poor roads.

Whatever else happened to the two teamsters, both of them picked up a different horse in a trade. John Wemple traded for a registered Cleveland Bay, a very willing horse, but he was very rawboned. John later traded him to his brother, Jay, who said you could hang your hat on him any place. He was called Tonopah, Tony for short.

John Doyle traded for a combination saddle and work horse which he got in Mason Valley, a valley through which the men passed. He was named Mason and he was a very fine horse.

CHAPTER FIFTEEN

John Wemple was to experience two other adventures before he moved away from Milford forever as his home. A plan to develop the desert land into farms around the area that is now Fallon, by diverting the Truckee River water, had taken birth. I do not remember how long John was employed on this job, or if he took a contract or worked by the day, but the job had to do with a dam in the Truckee River and a diversion ditch of part of the water to Fallon.

I don't think that John was employed longer than four months and I presume the compensation was adequate and available when the job was finished.

The thing that is most clear in my memory is John's account of the Tom Hill family where he boarded at their ranch house on the Truckee River.

There were fourteen children in the family and at meal time seven children sat on one side of the table and seven sat on the other. The father and mother sat on the ends.

According to John, there was never a cross word spoken nor an argument among any of the children while he boarded with the family. The Hill family, a little later, moved from the Truckee River to a large ranch in Willow Creek Valley. From 1912 through 1916 four of the Hill children went to Lassen County High School.

John Wemple became involved in another construction job, probably during the winter of 1904 and 1905, on Honey Island. Most of the desert land on what is known as Honey Island, a peninsula in Honey Lake, had been claimed by local people who lived in Honey Lake Valley. However, some of the land had been filed on by people who lived in far away places. Mike Beard, who took up a claim, came from Alabama.

Thaxter True, a blacksmith, who owned land on the desert, namely True Island, gave a pretty accurate description of the value of the land, one that was seldom heeded, but oh! how many millions of dollars could have been saved if people had followed Mr. True's advice. He thought that the land was worthless as far as showing a profit by farming and said of the whole peninsula: "When the almighty God created the world he had a lot of stuff left over, so he dumped it on Honey Island."

A large pumping plant was installed on the northeast shore of the peninsula to pump water out of the lake for irrigation purposes. John Wemple's part of this project was to build irrigation canals and ditches nearly across Honey Island to carry water and irrigate various patches of land under this system. One ditch ran in a westerly direction nearly across the peninsula.

John and his sons fulfilled their part of the obligation, but on the part of those who had contracted John to do the job not one cent was ever paid, according to Laurence Wemple, John's son.

Not long after this project had been completed the water receded until there was no water available at the pump. A huge one-cylinder gasoline engine had been installed to furnish power for the pump, and I suppose, water was pumped into the canal until the project had exhausted all funds.

John Wemple seemed to have been plagued by ill fortune for a good part of his life. Many of his undertakings turned out just like the above mentioned project.

John, who was ever cheerful and ever optimistic, was not about to be deterred by one failure or even two. As an afterthought into John's nature, I don't think that he slept very well or if he did he didn't require very much sleep.

He was the most sociable one of the family, and when he was not working he rose early, and for a long time after he was married he went to his mother's house for breakfast.

Then he would make the rounds to the homes of his brothers and their families. He liked to play jokes on other people, but when some one turned the table he did not appreciate it greatly, most people don't.

The next project that John became involved in was after Edmond gave up F. O. Wemple's ranch and moved to the Orin Barham ranch, where Art Blickenstaff later had his chicken houses.

I believe the other members of the family moved, also, for all but Ina and her husband, James Ferris, lived in the F. O. Wemple house. The planned destination of John and Abby Wemple and their four younger children, Laurence, Gladys, Earl, and Myrtle was Laytonville, Mendocino County.

Edmond and Grace Raker had married a short time previous to this move.

John had purchased a band of horses that summer from one of the Eledges, I believe it was Jim, and had them at Milford for two or three weeks before departing for Laytonville. John's mode of travel was not much different than that of the early day pioneers. He loaded a wagon or wagons with all of his earthly belongings and hit out for Laytonville, Mendocino County. There was no great fanfare, no farewell parties, no tearful goodbys when John, Abby, and their four younger children drove away from Milford where John had made his home since 1864, the time of his birth. About four or five years previous to John, Abby, and the four younger children's departure from Milford, John had sold his home to J. M. Doyle Jr. as stated on a former page, so there were no sales, legal matters, nor litigations to detain him. The family had a medium sized black dog that accompanied them on their journey, named Nig. Nig was not a very vicious looking dog, and he never had been, but as he followed the wagons and the band of horses, he soon learned that he would have to develop the noble art of self-defense, and this is what he did, he whipped every dog between Milford and Laytonville.

At the time that the John Wemple family moved to Laytonville, I was too young and uninterested to know anything about the preparations made to take care of the stock and family when the caravan reached their destination, but I have concluded that John Wemple had leased a ranch. The plan was to turn the horses into the mountains near Laytonville where there had been plenty of winter feed and seldom any snow.

As events developed this was the most ill fated experience that John Wemple had been forced to endure, even worse than Honey Island where he lost four to six months of working time and a loss of his horse feed.

On this expedition he lost his time in moving and the cost of moving and he lost his horses in a deep snowfall, something that very seldom happens in Mendocino County.

These horses were Lassen County range horses where the barren peaks and ridges are wind swept and bare after a deep snow storm. Here the horses find enough feed on the south side of the mountains to nurture them through the winter. But in Mendocino County there were no wind swept peaks nor ridges, the snow only becomes deeper on the higher elevations, so all of the horses perished. I don't think that they were able to save any of them.

Due to the loss of the horses, which under the most promising circumstance, are not a very profitable business, but with a complete loss staring the John Wemple family in the face, which no doubt, left the family almost penniless, something had to be done and without delay.

I am under the impression that during that winter Tom and Libby Harris spent the winter in Santa Rosa to get away from the cold and harsh winters of Elko, Nevada. Laurence, who wanted to further his education, boarded with them while he took a business course in Heald's College. For two or three years he lived in Mendocino County and became a blacksmith. Here he married Alma Clifton.

John, Abby, Gladys, and Myrtle found their way to San Francisco. Possibly Earl went to San Francisco, too. John became a motorman on a San Francisco street car line, the last thing that anyone would have expected of him.

John and his family were not in San Francisco much longer than twelve or eighteen months when they returned to Honey Lake Valley to lease the McClelland's ranch near Standish, and a year or two later, Laurence and Alma joined them. I think John and his family returned in 1910 for they were not in San Francisco when I went to Dr. Henderson's office off Union Square to try to correct my hearing problem. Gladys, however, was, for she married and remained in San Francisco. The year that I was in San Francisco was 1911. The scars of the April 1906 earthquake were all over the city - everywhere.

My father had taken me to the city with N. V. and Guy Wemple. Orvis Decious came down about that time also. He and Guy took courses in Heald's College; Guy's was business, Orvis's was auto-mechanics.

During this period of time Joseph Wemple had been plodding along through the latter years of his life. In December of 1910 he reached his eightieth year and from all appearances was in excellent health. He

continued to raise his bountiful garden, kept abreast of world and local news, and took care of himself and asked for very few favors.

Save for the years 1903 and 1904, 1906 and 1907, 1910 and 1911 when young married couples had rooms in his house, Joseph Wemple had been entirely alone.

CHAPTER SIXTEEN

Shortly after January 1, 1911 a record breaking snowfall came to all or most of northern California. The estimated amount of snow that fell at Milford was eight feet within a time of four or five days, but it settled down to five feet every where. Clif Smithson and his bride were living in Joseph Wemple's house at that time.

No one could force his way through five feet of snow, but the trails and roads had been kept partly open by use while snow was piling on everything. A trail or road would open by nightfall, but at dawn no one could see where the trail had been. When the snow reached three feet in depth the schools were closed.

Finally, when the storm ended, and the snow measured five feet, every one was snow bound. The only way to get thirty feet from the house was to dig a trail through the snow.

The road and trails were kept partly open to the store and post office where people used to congregate, but there was no mail for two or three weeks. An automobile was used to carry mail and passengers between Doyle and Susanville. The man who drove the stage was Mike Flynn. In the early stages of the storm, he had been to Doyle and in the afternoon was bucking his way through the snow in a vain attempt to struggle his way back to Susanville.

He reached Milford discouraged and worn out. With darkness closing in and with snow falling faster than ever he stopped at Milford. His passengers couldn't have stood much more of the storm, so they stopped at J. M. Doyle's hotel, and here they stayed until the road became passable for a buggy team.

During all of this storm Joseph Wemple weathered the storm very well. With the help of Clif Smithson, who made trails for himself and Joseph, they were not inconvenienced more than other neighbors.

This valley, and other valleys surrounding Honey Lake Valley were primarily stock producing valleys. A great deal of difficulty was experienced in getting hay to the stock. Jay C. Wemple fed his cattle every day with four large and strong horses hooked to a high wheeled wagon, but not all of the ranchers had that kind of team.

N. V. Wemple had smaller horses and he had farther to drive to feed his cattle. He had more trouble feeding. He may have used six horses. N. V. tried breaking the

road open by driving cattle over the road, but that didn't help much if any, for it made the center of the road high and the wagon wheels slid into the deep snow. Some of the ranchers turned their cattle into the hay stacks.

There were five feet of well packed snow over most of the valley, but Bert Jensen said there were six or six and one-half feet in Susanville. Seven feet were reported in Indian Valley.

Two sheds crashed to the ground at Jay C. Wemple's place. One was a wagon and buggy shed, the other was sheltering calves and hogs. One calf was killed, another had a badly broken front leg, and a pig may have been killed. The horse barn nearly went down for a tenon pulled out of a mortise and the front cross beam had to be replaced.

The stock shed went during the noon hour. A crew of men had been shoveling snow off the building and had climbed down to go for dinner. While they were enjoying their repast the building collapsed.

From the Jay C. Wemple home to J. M. Doyle's store, a distance of three eighths of a mile a five foot deep trail was broken by riding two horses through the snow. First one horse would buck the snow for 100 feet and then the second horse would move up front and open the trail for another 100 feet. In this manner, many trails were made around the ranch.

There was a narrow trail from our house to the barn and corrals. The trail was not wide enough to carry a bucket of milk at one's side, so the bucket had to be carried out in front with the arms extended. This proved to be quite a trick. I distinctly remember entering the long trench of snow five feet deep with a full bucket of milk, I don't think I reached the house with more than one-half of a bucket.

Five feet of packed snow lay atop all of the hay stacks. The rancher thought that it would surely be a great loss to leave five feet of heavy snow on the hay stacks, so Jay Wemple sent Orvis Decious and me one half mile, with shovels on horseback, to shovel the snow off a stack near the lake. We were able to get on the stack by standing on our horses.

As I recall, there was no wind and as a consequence there was no drifting. There was no more storm until all of the snow had melted, but in the packed roads there was enough snow in the road down the lane to coast on a hand sleigh to Jay C. Wemple's house on March 17, the time of the St. Patrick dance in Janesville. The snow lay on the ground in patches for three months.

An avalanche broke loose on a bare ridge southwest of Milford and crashed into a grove of three-foot pine trees, uprooting and carrying everything before it to a more nearly level spot, a quarter mile below. Pine trees were piled up like an old blown down rail fence. A stock trail was completely closed until the trees were

cleared away.

So many buildings collapsed during the 1911 snow storm that no one in the valley would build a new building unless it had a half-pitch roof, a ninety-degree angle. Snow will slide off a half pitch-roof.

I am not sure how well Joseph C. Wemple's fifty-seven year old house stood up under the heavy snowfall, but its twin, the Dakin house had fallen down or been torn down some time previous to this, and so had the old Grist mill. The Dakin house, had been lived in as late as 1906, but then the doors were left open, the windows were broken out, the shingles became loose and blew away. The well was filled in with dirt, and other out buildings fell down, "an empty house soon goes to wrack."

Guy Wemple, a boy of 15, had helped drive cattle from Milford to Constantia, a distance of 27 miles. During the snow storm when the cattle reached Constantia the storm had ended and the drive ended with the storm. Guy was summarily dismissed and told to find his way back to Doyle, a distance of nine miles. He was doubtful that his small Thoroughbred horse had enough stamina to buck five feet of snow for nine miles, but the horse, Dyson, came in with flying colors. The cattle that Guy helped drive belonged to the P. F. Ranch, P. F. for Pat Flannigan.

It was not true of another man working for the P. F. Ranch who had charge of a band of cattle near Fort Sage Mountain on the Long Valley Creek side. I think that he was boarding at the Charlie McQueen ranch. He became anxious about the cattle and had to go through the deep snow to see how the cattle were doing. How far he rode in the deep snow I don't know, but evidently he became tired and cold, he could go no farther, he was probably wet, so he froze to death. I am sure I could find out his name from Siona McQueen.

This was the only death caused by the storm of which I have any knowledge, although Jerry Bond, who lived a quarter mile north of the Blickenstaff ranch, died at his home of one of the usual causes of death. The undertaker couldn't get to the Bond home and the family could not get away from home, so Jerry, who was a large and portly man who must have weighed 200 pounds was taken out in the snow and buried until the undertaker could come.

CHAPTER SEVENTEEN

Clif Smithson and Mrs. Smithson lived in Joseph C. Wemple's house during the spring and summer of 1911 while he and Wade Boggs were building Jay C. Wemple's new horse barn, a barn about fifty by fifty with a half-pitched roof.

Boggs and Smithson built the barn from lumber from

a sawmill that Boggs had set up especially for the purpose of building Wemple's barn. Boggs and Smithson felled the timber, limbed and cut it to the desired length and Jay C. Wemple and his brother-in-law, Orvis Decious, dragged the logs to the mill. After the logs were cut into lumber of the desired dimensions, it was hauled to the Jay C. Wemple ranch where it was built into a barn. That year the barn was filled with second crop alfalfa hay.

Smithson and his bride had come to California from Ohio against the advice of all of their relatives, who said that he would be back in Ohio within one month. Clif stayed through the winter, spring, and summer of the next year to prove that all of his relatives were wrong, even though both he and his wife longed to go back to Ohio. They had come to Sunny California only to find themselves snowbound in five feet of snow in January. He may not have had enough money to have gone to Ohio.

Anyway, as soon as the barn had been finished and Clif had collected his share of the money, he and Mrs. Smithson headed back toward Ohio. I doubt if anyone has heard of them since then.

After the Smithsons moved away from Joseph Wemple's house and the F. O. Wemple house was empty, which was not more than fifty yards from Joseph's home, there was no next-door neighbors except the Samuel Johnson family who lived seventy or eighty yards south of Joseph's house. The Joseph Wemple house may have been damaged by the heavy snowfall of the preceding winter.

In any event the family of sons, N. V., J. C., and O. E. Wemple, with no doubt the approval of F. O. Wemple, who at that time lived in either Johnstonville or Janesville. The family, with the approval of Joseph, undoubtedly, decided to tear his house down.

As a boy of fifteen I happened to walk up to Joseph's old home, and found a group of men, one or two hired, perhaps, wrecking the house while Joseph sat by in a chair with tears running down his cheeks, the most cherished thing that he had left, his home, being destroyed forever.

The men on the building seemed not to notice Joseph as they went about their work. To Joseph it must have been a harbinger of what lies in store for every thing earthly created by man.

Joseph had, no doubt, taken up his residence in the small house near N. V. Wemple's house prior to the wrecking of his home. Since 1864, he had lived in his old house for forty-five years.

He adjusted to the move without any difficulty and was able to take care of himself with some help from various members of his large family, but mostly N. V. Wemple's family, for his home was situated partly in N. V. Wemple's back yard. His home is the building now used for the Milford post office.

The store, a little later, was moved to its present location and the post office was located within the store, so Joseph did not have so far to walk for his mail and groceries.

From 1911 through his remaining years, he raised a large garden with the exception of the last two or three years. Where his old house stood, the lot, the garden land, the barn, and corrals had been John Wemple's part of inheritance.

About the time that John Wemple and his family returned from San Francisco, William Sifford and his entire family, who had moved to Stillwater, Nevada, in 1900 returned to buy the Otis ranch six miles south of Milford. Edna and Lottie, Sifford's older daughters, had married and had families, and they came with their father. Benton, Sifford's oldest son, did not come with them.

Edna had married Ralph Conrad and had three children, Lottie had married Lee Winder and had two. It soon became apparent that there was not any kind of a living for three families on the Otis ranch so Lee and Lottie bought the Joseph Wemple lot from John Wemple and built a new house. Will Sifford did the carpenter work.

N. V. Wemple promoted a new blacksmith shop business in the mostly abandoned creamery with Lee Winder and Lyle Wemple as partners.

Harry Robinson at that time was the Milford blacksmith, but he concluded that there was not enough business to support two shops, so he moved his family to Loma Linda.

Neither Lee Winder nor Lyle Wemple was satisfied with the blacksmith business, so in time Milford was without a blacksmith. I am not certain how long Lee, Lottie and their two sons lived in their new house, but I don't think it was very long.

Edmond and Grace Wemple came back to Milford and leased the house in 1912 for a short time. Andy York, his wife and four daughters had been living in F. O. Wemple's house, but left Milford in 1912, or about that time. For a few years the Winder home was not occupied.

Before 1912, there had been several old people who lived in Milford or had lived here. They were: Stephen and Mrs. Doyle (not related to J. M. Doyle Sr. and his family), Bobbie Wollen, Wellington Adams, James L. McDermott and Mrs. McDermott, Mrs. Samantha Tyler, and the above mentioned J. M. Doyle and Mrs. Mary Doyle, his wife.

J. M. Doyle, his wife, Mrs. Doyle, and Mrs. Tyler were the only ones who were alive after 1912. J. M. Doyle was born during the year 1830, a few months before Joseph C. Wemple. Although they were all pioneers and had to stand together in early pioneer days, they seldom socialized. However, after 1905 when Doyle's store and hotel was opened for business,

J. M. Doyle Sr. and Joseph C. Wemple met almost daily in the store. The women of that era were expected and usually did remain at home except on special occasions.

December 31, 1914, N. V. Wemple's term as assessor of Lassen County came to an end. His friend's term, A. C. Hunsinger, with whom N. V. had canvassed Lassen County when both ran for offices and Hunsinger had been elected sheriff and served eight years, came to an end in 1918.

At the expiration of Hunsinger's last term and retirement, N. V. announced his candidacy for sheriff of Lassen County. His opponents were James Church and E. A. Jordan. The campaign had barely gotten under way when N. V. withdrew his candidacy, I never knew why. James Church was elected sheriff.

I was in high school from 1912 to 1916, so during those years my connection with the Wemple family was pretty well cut off. Joseph Wemple's daily life was more or less repetitious, and some times dull and tiresome, but N. V. and Pearl's family of five boys and two girls tended to enliven and break the monotony of the passing days.

CHAPTER EIGHTEEN

In the year 1914 a war broke out in Europe which rapidly spread to distant countries until so many nations were involved, including the United States, that the war was called World War I.

Most of the young men joined some branch of the United States Armed Forces or were drafted in 1917. Notices were sent out to all of the young men of military age of Lassen County to appear before the Draft Board in Susanville for a physical examination. Some requests for deferments were made by ranchers for their sons who were necessary for the successful operation of a ranch. Both Fred Wemple and I were in that classification, although I did not pass the examination because of my hearing. At the time of the examination, I had just recovered from a bout with jaundice and had lost about eighteen or twenty pounds. Both Fred and I received a deferment.

High on the list for necessary articles for war was wheat. We were supposed to eat any kind of bread but wheat. The United States asked to produce as much wheat as possible, but eat none. Bread was one kind of food that nearly every household used three times each day. People complained about barley, rye, and corn bread that they were supposed to use in place of wheat bread.

Perhaps, World War I was reminiscent of the Civil War to Joseph C. Wemple, only this time our enemy

was far away from home; this had never happened before to the United States except in the Spanish-American War when we spread out as far as the Philippines. "The expense of this war is placed at \$165,000,000 up to October 31, 1908," according to the Progressive Reference Library, what a change from our present day expenses!

Not many young men from Lassen County saw any action in this war or even left the United States. The draft went into effect in 1917 and the war ended a little over one year later. Still most families where there were boys of military age gave one or two to the war effort. There were several such families living in Honey Lake Valley at that time.

N. V. Wemple had two sons and John one, but none saw any action.

I am not sure how the war affected Joseph C. Wemple, but he seemed to have taken everything in stride. The war fever ran high in Honey Lake Valley over the activities reported in the press of the German Army. If allied armies were guilty of such acts none were reported. The people who were left home doubled their efforts in an attempt to produce enough food to help conquer the German nation.

The main priority was wheat, but pork and butter were in great demand. Live hogs sold for twenty cents per pound, butterfat reached seventy-five cents.

But all of this was short-lived, for after the end of the war prices fell to about one-half of the peak price.

The two old men, Joseph C. Wemple and J. M. Doyle, were about the same age. J. M. Doyle was a few months older and both were well up in their eighties. Both were apparently in good health. Father Time gets closer as people get older and I remember hearing the remark, "Which one will go first?" Most of the friends were gone who were near their age.

In the year 1917, the dry year that struck with such a devastating force, J. M. Doyle succumbed to rigors of the troubles of advanced years.

I used to call on Grandpa Wemple occasionally and on one occasion on April 23, 1916, I walked in on him and after the exchange of greetings, Grandpa said to me: "Libby is sixty years old today and for the life of me I don't know where the time has gone." Some time after that I walked into Grandpa Joseph's home. Evidently, he was not feeling very well, for when I inquired about his health he answered, "I am just worn out."

My wife, Henrietta, and I were married August 3, 1916, and we lived with my father's family until the following April. But before that time arrived, which was not long after we were married, Dad approached me and said that he thought I should be making preparations to acquire a home of my own. He mentioned the often repeated platitude that two women can't get along in the same house. My youthful nature had prevented me from realizing that my wife and I

were something of a burden to my father and mother, especially since they had eight children without me and Henrietta.

Dad had everything figured out how Henrietta and I could own a home. George Robinson, Harry Robinson's brother, had started to build a new home near the cemetery turnoff. The small house was partly constructed when George and Mrs. Robinson decided that they no longer wanted to live here. In other words, the house was for sale for 450 dollars, and J. M. Doyle Jr. would lend me the money at eight per cent interest.

Dad and I got out long timber to put under the house and to connect them to the running gears of two separate wagons and with the house resting on the timbers it was moved to its present location.

N. V. and Jay C. Wemple wintered some of the Red River Lumber Company's horses that year and some of those were used to make up the two six-horse teams used to move the house.

That fall and winter I worked on the house when I wasn't milking cows or feeding cattle, and by April we were ready to move into our new home.

When the small house was completed we had a good sized kitchen, a living room about twelve by twelve, a tiny bath room, a pantry, and a bedroom just large enough for a bed and a dresser with room enough to get



Pictured left to right Jay C. Wemple, Claude C. Wemple, Henrietta Winchester Wemple, Joseph I. (Sammy) Wemple. Sitting, David Wemple with family dog, Ben. Picture was taken circa 1936. Pictured in the background is the house that Claude built for Henrietta and himself.

into bed. Uncle N. V. looked at the small house and said, "you will be snug as a bug in a rug."

We felt rather proud of our new home so we decided to ask Grandpa Joseph to have dinner with us for we were uncertain of "The days of our years" and knew that "if by reason of strength they be four score years," which he had passed by more than six years, "yet is their strength, labor, and sorrow; for it is soon cut off and we fly away."

So we borrowed Dad's car and with Grandpa's approval brought him to our small house for dinner. I think he enjoyed himself, for we enjoyed having him. About that time we invited Uncle N. and Aunt Pearl to our house for dinner. Uncle N. had given us a bath tub which he had displaced when he built his new home in 1909. Henrietta made a mistake of seasoning the roast with garlic. Neither Uncle N. nor Aunt Pearl cared for garlic, so the roast was a big disappointment to all of us.

Something that has escaped my memory happened about eight years earlier in the lives of the Wemple family. Aunt Mary Wemple, Nicholas V. Wemple's widow, came to visit her brother-in-law's family at Milford. She traveled by train and arrived late in the year. I have often wondered how badly lost she must have felt two thousand miles from home among total strangers, even though they were in-laws.

She seemed to have a penchant for baking cookies. She was friendly and tried to make herself useful. After a stay of ten days or two weeks with one family she would move to another. While she was at my father's house a snow storm moved in on us. She saw cattle moving around out in eighteen inches of snow and asked us if we left our cattle out in the snow in the winter time. When we answered that the cattle were left out in the snow, she said that all of the cattle were kept under shelter when it snowed in Michigan.

My mother invited Grandpa Wemple, while she was with us, to dinner. Aunt Bessie Wemple remarked that Aunt Mary came from Michigan with matrimony on her mind. At that time, that seemed a little preposterous to me, but as years advanced I have learned that human nature does not change as much when the years creep up on us as I had surmised.

Aunt Mary and Uncle Nicholas only had one married son remaining, others having died near birth. Nicholas V. Wemple passed away Aug. 5th, 1905. I have concluded, that because she was alone and only had one married son, she came to visit her in-laws in California.

After three or four months with her relatives, she returned to Michigan. I suppose that certain members of the family heard from Aunt Mary after she returned to Michigan. Possibly Grandpa Wemple heard from her, but because of my youthful years, I doubt that I



CLAUDE AND HENRIETTA WEMPLE GRADUATION PICTURE

This composite photograph is made of Claude and Henrietta's high school graduation pictures. Claude and Henrietta began their married life in Milford and lived the next 68 years there, raising a family of one girl and three boys.

ever heard anything about her, not even of her death.

During the years of 1917 and 1918 the young men who had not been taken into the armed forces of the United States were very busy on the ranches and farms. In 1917, in the spring, the water in Honey Lake was very high but by 1919 the lake was completely dry. This was the first time since March in 1904.

While we on the farms were doing our best to have high production, we were not doing a very good job because of the drought. For sometime N. V. and Jay C. Wemple were the only ones of Joseph C. Wemple's sons left on the ranch. N. V. had leased O. E. Wemple's ranch and Jay C. and his son, Claude had leased F. O. Wemple's ranch.

The Wemple brothers had worked together in haying until 1917, but after that each one did his own haying. However, George Harwood, Jay C. and N. V. Wemple had purchased a header together and worked as one crew when grain harvesting came around.

CHAPTER NINETEEN

N. V. Wemple, Pearl, the five boys, and two daughters kept a close watch on Joseph C. Wemple as time crept upon him and he became a little less active. But about the year 1918, N. V. and Pearl's older daughter, Maude, became very ill. No one was able to help her in any way, and as I remember, she became resigned to death. I do not recall what disease struck her, but I am inclined to believe it was leukemia. I do not know that very much was known of leukemia in 1918 or 1919. The word is not listed in a 1924 dictionary that I have.

Maude continued to loose strength until 1919, in the spring, I believe, she passed away. There is no date on the stone except 1919.

Joseph Wemple, while anything but a spiritualist, said a child passed before him when Maude died.

Joseph Wemple didn't know it at the time, but he had just two years left of life here on earth. I think he quit gardening about that time, but continued to take most of the care of himself. He would occasionally send for a bottle of patented medicine, or did at least on one occasion, which bore the inscription "guaranteed to make the old guy young," according to Orville Wemple. The claim on the medicine bottle was true in one respect for it increased Joseph's yardage to the outside toilet considerably.

In 1918 Fred, N. V.'s third son, married Carrie Houghton and moved into the Lee Winder home where Joseph Wemple's house stood. N. V.'s two older boys, Orville and Guy, had not been discharged from the army, so during that time N. V.'s family had been

reduced by three and a little later with Maude's passing by four.

Joseph lived quietly by N. V., Pearl and the three children, Lyle, Bernice, and Percy.

I do not think that at this time in his life he required a great deal of attention, but if he did he received it from the two Wemple families then living in Milford, N. V. and Jay C.'s families. Most of it came from N. V.'s family, because they lived next door to Joseph.

F. O. Wemple had moved to Janesville from Johnstonville about 1912 and opened a store there. He ran for supervisor, probably in 1914 or '15 and was elected. Shortly after the election O. E. Wemple took over F. O. Wemple's store and in either 1915 or 1916, he built a new house in Janesville. Some time later F. O. Wemple moved to Susanville and ran for assessor and again he was elected. He was re-elected a number of times and spent the rest of his life as assessor of Lassen County.

In the interim, the life of Joseph Wemple had been moving along with very few changes. If at any time he became ill he kept his condition pretty well to himself.

N. V. and his sons were still operating the N. V. and O. E. Wemple ranches. Orville and Guy had come home from the army and N. V. had helped his sons in leasing the Brookman ranch and signed for a loan to purchase a dairy. After about six or eight months, Orville, who was very small, about 100 pounds, thought that the work was too hard for him and left the ranch. In explanation, he said he was more tired when he got up, than when he went to bed. The opportunities for making a living with resources available and the expenses ever present were not much better at this time in the business of farming than they are now. So after two or three years of what Guy thought was excessively high rent, he too gave up farming on his own, and he and his wife, Dorothy, hired out to Bert Jensen, a rancher.

Ranching had become more profitable, because of the war in 1917 and 1918, but after the war, which ended late in 1918, prices fell off rapidly.

This was an era of the introduction of the automobile. Our economy had been geared primarily to a less costly way of living. We had money for food, clothing, wood to heat the house, wood to cook and can the food, and wood to do the washing. The cost of the wood was often a matter of three or four weeks in the woods on the edge of the valley with each rancher cutting his own wood. There was a very small cash outlay. Flour, meat, milk, and fruit were produced on the ranch with very little drain on the pocket book.

But when the automobiles commenced to roll on the highways, dirt roads everywhere with deep mud or snow in the winter and deep and winding sandy roads in the summer, the fate of the farmer was financially sealed, and the specter of the Great Depression would periodically peek over the Horizon at the unsuspecting

populace. Almost ten years were required for him to come from his hiding place, but when he did the nation was financially paralyzed.

But Joseph Wemple missed this time in our life history by eight years. There were brighter aspects in Joseph's life near the end, particularly concerning his son, John, who had his own problems, but now with his son, Laurence, owned a ranch near Standish.

On one occasion when I visited Grandpa Joseph he remarked that he had worried many times about John and at one time had said to Hi Skadian, an emigrant who came on the train from Michigan in 1862 with the group that brought Jane Wemple to California: "I don't know what I can do about John". Hi had answered: "He is young, leave him alone, he will come out alright." "And now he has," Grandpa happily said to me.

Everything was going very well for the Wemple family in 1918, 1919, except for Maudie's death. Both F. O. and O. E. Wemple were prosperous, and while N. V. and Jay C. were little more than eeking out a living if they were doing that without a deficit, they were lucky. Still they had very few serious problems. The ranchers, while unable to reduce their debts, had "good and bad" years. But whenever they had a good year instead of reducing their debts they bought a new automobile.

Fred Wemple and his wife, Carrie, had continued to live in the Lee Winder house. Carrie had become

pregnant and in May 1920 her time to deliver a new baby had arrived but it was not to be. Both Carrie and the baby boy died in child birth. Fred moved back with his father and mother, Lyle, Percy and Bernice.

Grandpa Joseph, as far as I know, had been taking most of the care of himself, but in his own words was completely worn out, still he had lived alone, with some one calling on him occasionally.

N. V., Pearl and the two younger children, Percy and Bernice, left the ranch to Fred and Lyle some time after the death of Carrie and her baby. They moved to Susanville but were gone less than a year when Fred phoned Jay C. that Grandpa Joseph was very ill. So Jay went immediately to Grandpa's small house.

He was breathing his last breath of life and soon was gone. No warning of approaching death was evident the night before. He had not complained of any illness but death came upon him suddenly.

So passed the life of a very honest, unselfish and one of the least self-centered persons that I have ever known. He died on his sixty-sixth wedding anniversary and was placed beside his wife, Jane, from whom he had been separated for eighteen years.

I do not recall all of the pallbearers but Hardin Barry was one of them and years later he told me that he considered it an honor to have been Joseph Wemple's pallbearer.







